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INSIDE
Your guide
to studying
history in
2019

Anne Boleyn

A victim of
her father's
ambition?

Princess Margaret:
Royal renegade

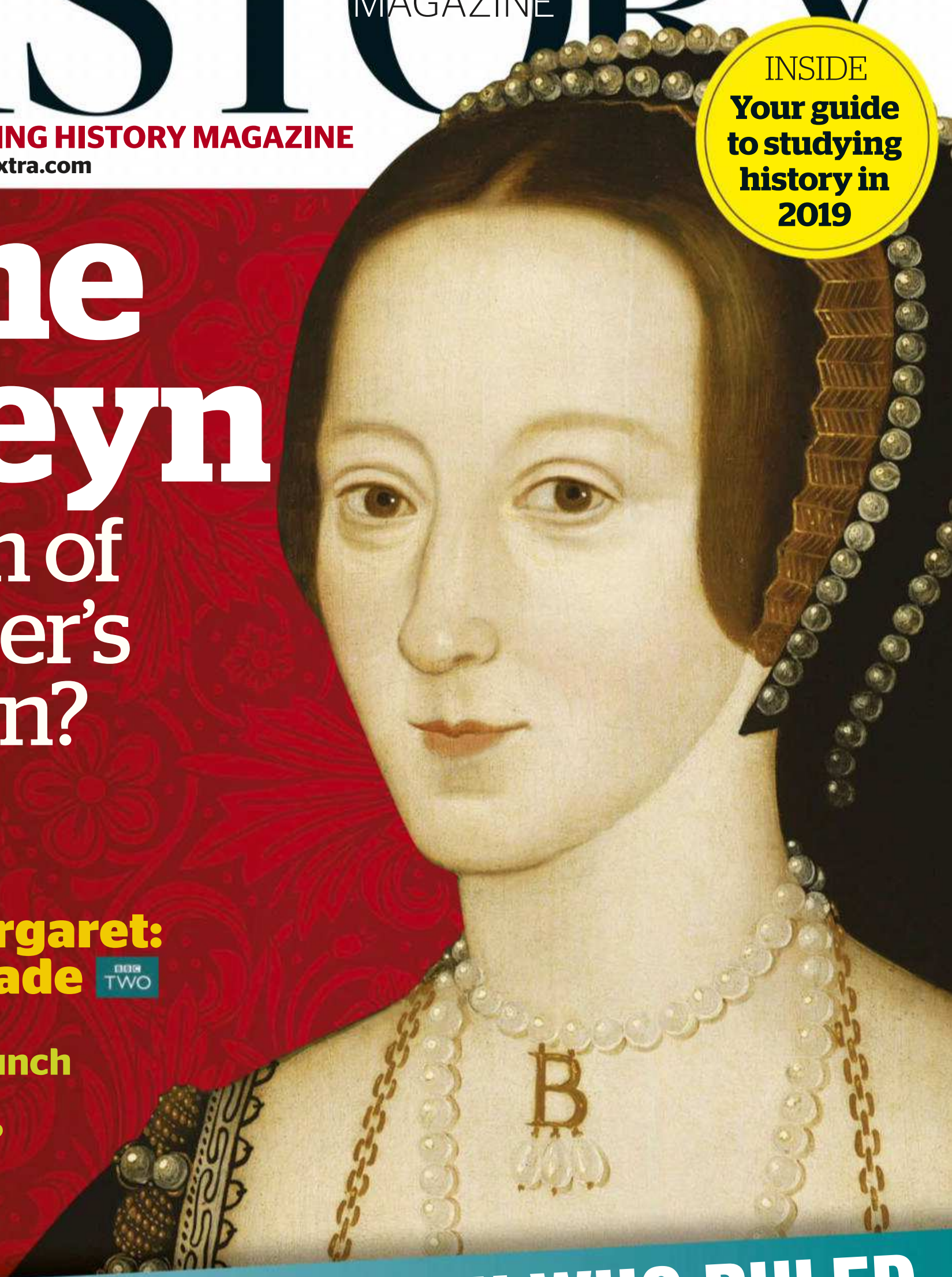
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TWO

Was the credit crunch
worse than the
Wall Street crash?

PLUS



THE WOMEN WHO RULED ANCIENT ROME



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“ Narratives of **Anne Boleyn**'s life tend to focus on her relationship with the man who married and subsequently beheaded her, Henry VIII. But there is another figure whose influence on the Tudor queen shouldn't be underestimated, and that is her father, **Thomas Boleyn**. A leading light in Henry's court, Thomas's actions were instrumental in moulding Anne into the woman who would catch the king's eye. In this month's cover feature, on page 26, Lauren Mackay explores the family dynamics behind one of English history's best-known dramas.

Elsewhere, we are exploring two crises 70 years apart that both led to tremendous tensions in the UK. On page 20, Robert Crowcroft shows how Chamberlain's attempts to placate **Hitler at Munich in 1938** nearly brought down his government. Then, on page 32, experts reflect on the **2008 financial crisis**, comparing it to previous crashes, and considering how sharp a rupture it has been in 21st-century history.

Of course 2008 is still very recent history and some might consider that it is not yet history at all. There is, however, little agreement about how much distance is required before historians can begin their work and whether different approaches are needed when analysing events still fresh in the memory. These are issues **Ian Kershaw** has wrestled with in **writing a new history of Europe since 1950** and in this month's essay, on page 59, he relates the challenges he has faced in producing a book that sits entirely within his own lifetime.

I hope you enjoy the issue.

Rob Attar
Editor



THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS



Robert Crowcroft

The Munich agreement of September 1938 was a seminal moment in 20th century diplomatic history, but much less well known is the domestic political struggle in Britain sparked by the crisis.

● *Robert describes how the Munich crisis almost brought down the British government on page 20*



Lauren Mackay

Thomas Boleyn enjoyed a career spanning 40 years as a courtier, ambassador, parliamentarian and patron, but this is often forgotten. My research seeks to rehabilitate his image and restore him to his rightful place in Tudor history.

● *Lauren tells the story of Anne Boleyn's controversial father, Thomas, on page 26*



Meleisa Ono-George

Choosing the right history degree can seem daunting. However, with a little bit of research you can find the degree, department and university that is best suited to you and your intellectual needs.

● *Meleisa offers advice for selecting the right history course for you on page 69*

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OCTOBER 2018

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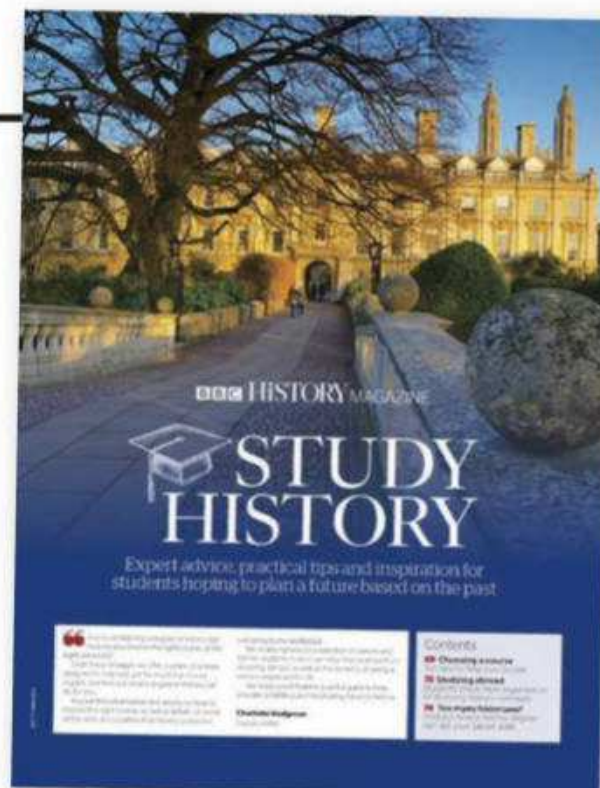
The international and domestic repercussions of the Munich agreement

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BOLEYN WAS
DEDICATED TO
HIS DAUGHTER,
ANNE'S, CAUSE.
THE TRAGEDY IS
THAT THEY WERE
TORN APART"**



Dominic Sandbrook highlights events that took place in **October** in history

ANNIVERSARIES

26 October 1881

Guns are ablaze at the OK Corral

Lawmen trade bullets with a gang of outlaws in a shoot-out that goes down in Wild West legend

In the popular imagination, the gunfight at the OK Corral has become shorthand for a vanished age of daring outlaws and rugged lawmen, facing each other in the dust of the Old West. The reality, however, was a long distance from the Hollywood portrayals seen in numerous westerns.

Founded near the Mexican border, Tombstone, Arizona was only two years old in 1881, but people flooded in every week. The settlement boasted scores of saloons, a bowling alley, two newspapers and an opera house. It was not a contented place, though. Political rivalries, feuds and communal tensions were rife, not least between the rich saloon interests and rural cowboys. This was where the Earp brothers, representing the town, and the Clanton and McLaury brothers (the cowboys), came in.

After weeks of simmering tension, matters came to a head on 26 October 1881. The famous gunfight was an attempt by Tombstone's newly appointed marshal Virgil Earp, his brothers Wyatt and Morgan and friend Doc Holliday to disarm members of a gang of outlaws, who had defied the law by bringing weapons into the town. Contrary to popular belief, the shooting did not happen at the actual OK Corral, but at a scruffy lot nearby. And it was all over in moments.

The trigger was Virgil's cry: "Boys, throw up your hands. I want your guns!" Two cowboys drew their revolvers and then somebody (accounts of who that person was differ) fired the first shot. The air was thick with gun smoke, then 30 seconds later, the guns fell silent. Three cowboys lay dead, but a legend was born.



Burt Lancaster (right) stars as Wyatt Earp in the 1957 western *Gunfight at the OK Corral*. A biography of Earp published in 1931 made the shoot-out a household name

30 October 1965

The mini dress makes waves at the races

Swinging Sixties model Jean Shrimpton causes a stir by baring her knees

Derby Day, and Melbourne was agog. The Victoria Racing Club had started a 'Fashions on the Field' event to attract younger visitors, and in 1965, they had pulled off a coup. At a cost of £2,000, textile firm DuPont persuaded Jean Shrimpton to fly from London to judge the fashion show.

To many in 1965, the 22-year-old Shrimpton was not just the world's most celebrated model. She was a symbol of modernity itself, the embodiment of Swinging London. No wonder the Australian press were excited.

Shrimpton and her dressmaker, Colin Rolfe, designed a white shift dress using DuPont's new acrylic fabric, Orlon. But they did not have enough so Rolfe had to cut it short, about four inches above the knee. Also, the day of her appearance was hot. Shrimpton chose not to wear stockings, a hat or gloves.

She never imagined the fuss to come. When Shrimpton walked into the members' lounge, there was a long, appalled silence. "There she was, the world's highest-paid model, snubbing the iron-clad conventions at fashionable Flemington in a dress five inches above the knee, NO hat, NO gloves, and NO stockings!" gasped the Melbourne *Sun News-Pictorial*.

Later, this was seen as the moment the mini-skirt was born, even though Shrimpton was actually wearing a dress. But to the British press, the furore merely proved that Australia was decades behind the times. "Surrounded by sober draped silks and floral nylons, ghastly tulle hats and fur stoles," the *Evening News* said witheringly, Shrimpton looked "like a petunia in an onion patch".

ALAMY

Dominic Sandbrook is a historian and presenter. His Radio 4 show on *The Real Summer of Love* is available at Archive on 4

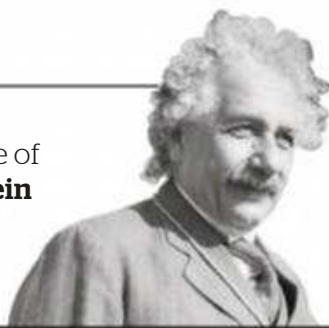


Jean Shrimpton photographed wearing the now legendary dress at Derby Day in Melbourne, October 1965

GETTY IMAGES

17 October 1933

Horrified by the rise of Hitler, **Albert Einstein** arrives in the US to begin a new life and career.



31 October AD 802

In Constantinople, the **Empress Irene** is deposed as ruler of the **Byzantine empire**. She dies the following year in exile on the island of Lesbos.

25 October 1760

Amid general rejoicing, **George III** succeeds his grandfather to become king of Great Britain.



View of the Arch of Constantine with the Colosseum by Canaletto, 1742–45. When Edward Gibbon visited Rome in 1764, “the city was a crumbling relic, unimaginable as the capital of the greatest empire in the world”, says Dominic Sandbrook

15 October 1764

Edward Gibbon finds unlikely inspiration in a crumbling city

A disappointing trip to the once-great city of Rome inspires the scholar to write his finest work

The autumn of 1764 found the 27-year-old Edward Gibbon in Italy, enjoying the delights of the Grand Tour. After leaving Oxford, Gibbon spent years studying in Switzerland and serving with the Hampshire militia during the Seven Years’ War. Now he had made a pilgrimage to what had once been the greatest of all cities, Rome.

As Gibbon recalled, he would never forget “the strong emotions which agitated my mind as I first approached and entered the eternal city”. To a learned young man, to see the “ruins of the Forum” or the “memorable spot where Romulus stood... or Caesar fell” was almost unimaginably thrilling. Yet Rome’s glory days were gone. The city in

the 1760s was a crumbling relic, unimaginable as the capital of the greatest empire in the world.

By Gibbon’s own account, the gulf between past and present weighed heavily on his mind. He later wrote: “It was at Rome, on 15 October 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing Vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind.”

Gibbon’s biographers often describe this as a fanciful invention, and perhaps it was. But there is no doubt that the trip had an effect on Gibbon. And 12 years later, the great historian published the first of six volumes of his magnum opus, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

10 October 1899

The British are issued with a Boer ultimatum

Rivalry and discontent in South Africa triggers a declaration of war

Just after six o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, 10 October 1899, the most dynamic politician of the age was asleep in London. As colonial secretary, Joseph Chamberlain was master of the British empire. In the last few weeks, he had been absorbed by the situation in South Africa, where his agents were drawing a net around the gold-rich Boer republics. Chamberlain was awoken by a knock at the door, announcing an urgent message from the Colonial Office. He tore it open, and exclaimed: "They have done it!"

The news from South Africa was an ultimatum, in response to Chamberlain's increasing pressure, sent by the Boers' uncompromising leader, Paul Kruger. Probably drafted by the young Jan Smuts (a future South African prime minister), the message accused Britain of stirring up discontent inside the Transvaal, insisted that Chamberlain withdraw the



A photograph showing British troops bound for South Africa from *The Illustrated London News* on 11 November 1899. The war, which began a month earlier, lasted until 1902

troops massing on the border, and demanded that no British troops currently on the high seas should be landed in South Africa. It was designed to be a show of strength to put Britain on the back foot, but it had the effect of uniting opinion against the Boers' so-called "insolence".

To the next day's papers, Kruger's ultimatum was a joke. *The Times* mocked this "infatuated step" by a "petty republic", while *The Globe* was scathing

about the "impudent burghers" of "this trumpery little state". And although *The Telegraph* was "in doubt whether to laugh or to weep", there was no question about what Britain's response should be: "There can be only one answer to this grotesque challenge... Mr Kruger has asked for war, and war he must have."

On Wednesday, the ultimatum expired and the Boer War began. But it would be longer, bloodier and more difficult than anybody expected. **H**

COMMENT / SAUL DAVID

"It was, wrote Churchill, a 'miserable war, ill-omened in its beginning'"

“The fight against the Boer republics was, wrote one historian, “Britain's last major war of imperial expansion and it provided humiliating evidence of physical decrepitude as well as moral turpitude”. This is fair. Britain's initial strategy was to divide their forces and invade Boer territory from three directions. But three disastrous defeats in the 'Black Week' of December 1899 resulted in a change of strategy.

Forces were then concentrated for the relief of the besieged city of Kimberley – achieved in February 1900. The Boer capitals of Bloemfontein and Pretoria fell in March and June respectively. Yet British

forces had failed to trap and destroy any significant Boer army or to inflict a major defeat in the field, and the enemy simply switched to guerilla warfare. The British responded by destroying Boer farms and driving 160,000 Boers (mainly women and children) and 130,000 Africans into concentration camps, where up to a sixth of the incarcerated population died of disease and malnutrition.

In May 1902, a compromise peace was agreed by the Treaty of Vereeniging, which cost the Boers their independence but guaranteed them, in the words of one historian, “a stake in the British empire as

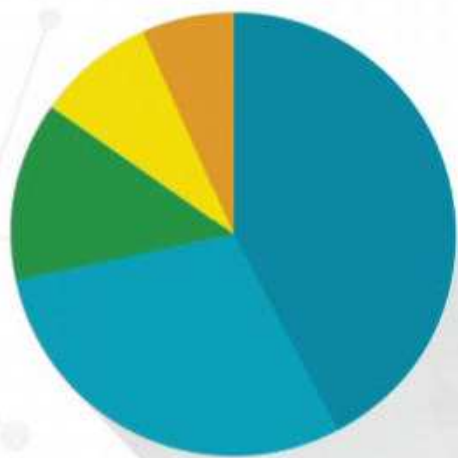
well as mastery over the black man”.

Even the arch-imperialist Churchill was appalled. It was, he wrote, a “miserable war – unfortunate and ill-omened in its beginning, inglorious in its course, cruel and hideous in its conclusion”.



Saul David is professor of military history at the University of Buckingham. His non-fiction books include *Zulu* (2004), *Victoria's Wars* (2006) and *All The King's Men* (2012)

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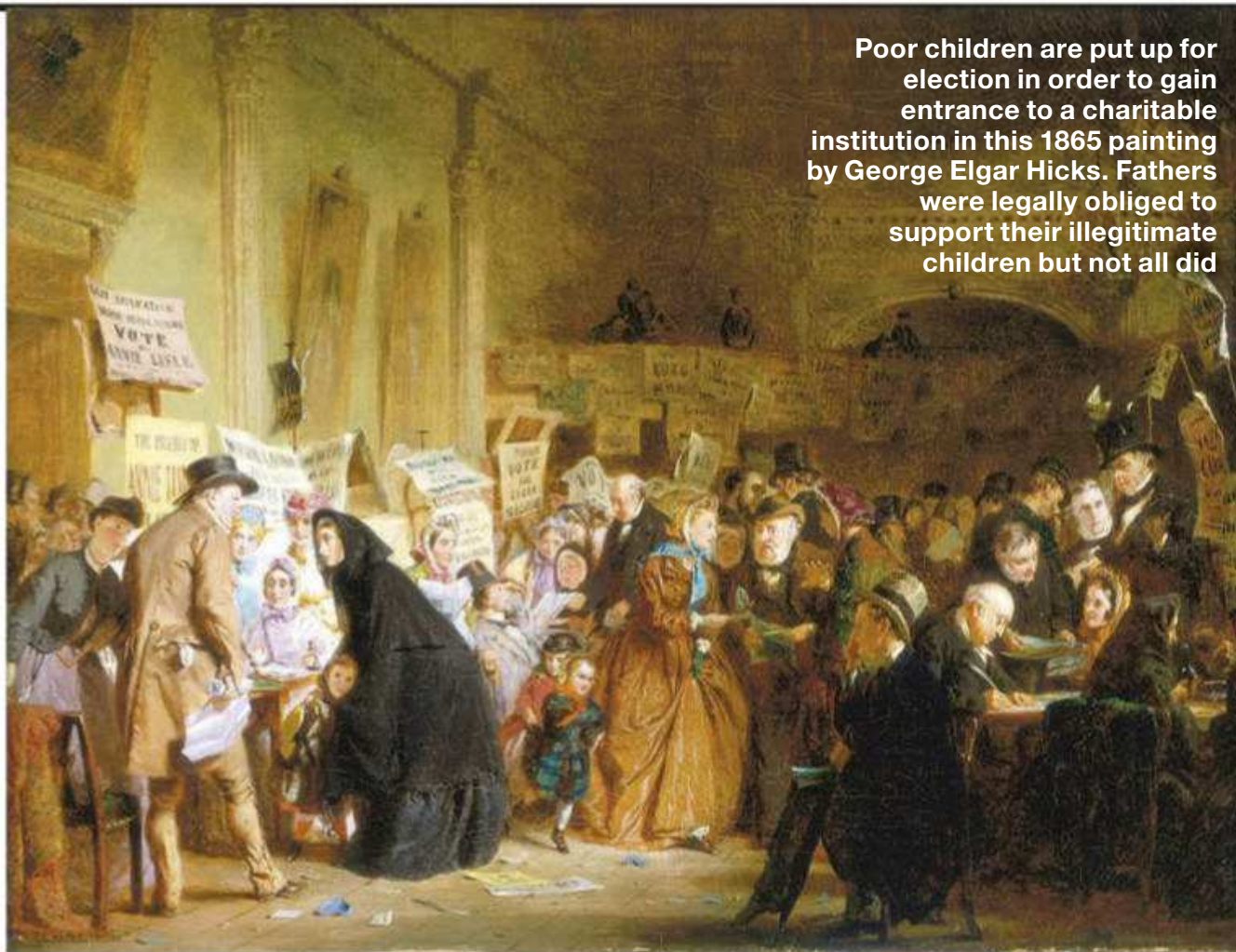
Curtains up!

Privates Johnny Heawood and Bill Dunstan of the Canadian army get into character as drag queens 'Trilby' and 'Trixie' of The Tin Hats, a cabaret troupe created to entertain soldiers during the Second World War. This is one of several images taken by photographer John Topham during a visit to the base of the Royal Artillery Coastal Defence Battery – at Shornemead Fort, near Gravesend, Kent. The photos were banned from publication by the Ministry of Information and have only now come to light.



PARENTING

“Some fathers are recorded as deserting to the Cape, France or the East Indies to avoid paying maintenance”



Poor children are put up for election in order to gain entrance to a charitable institution in this 1865 painting by George Elgar Hicks. Fathers were legally obliged to support their illegitimate children but not all did



New research has revealed how unmarried mothers in 18th and 19th-century London were supported by an early version of today's Child Support Agency.

Dr Samantha Williams (left), who conducted the study, explains the financial obligations expected from fathers

When were fathers legally required to provide financial support for their illegitimate children?

Legislation passed between 1576 and 1810 established and strengthened the legal links between children and their reputed fathers.

An act of 1576 specified that parents of 'Bastards now being left to be kept at the Charge of the Parish where they be born' were financially responsible rather than the parish ratepayers. This changed in 1733 to say that "any Single woman [who] shall be delivered of a Bastard Child which shall be chargeable or likely to become chargeable" was to be brought by the parish to be examined on oath before two magistrates in order to prove the child's paternity. She would then be required to "charge any person with having gotten her with child" and the putative father was then asked to pay towards the upkeep of his offspring.

What expenses were fathers liable for?

There were a variety of expenses and different ways to pay. All fathers were expected to recoup the parish of the costs of childbirth and the mother's lying-in for a month (midwife, childbed linen, nursing etc) as well as any legal fees associated with getting him to court and the order of filiation (to link the child and parent) being made. He might then pay a lump sum, sometimes in instalments, and discharge any further responsibility. Some men were ordered to pay a weekly maintenance sum. The age when 'nurture' from a mother might be expected to stop was seven years old and many men paid maintenance for seven years. However, some men paid for up to 15 years.

So-called bastardy books were used to record financial details, such as sums ordered and actually paid and the duration of maintenance.

How did parishes ensure fathers paid?

Fathers were asked to enter into a bond of £80 to £200 – a very substantial sum at the time. This could be called in if the father defaulted or died. They could also be imprisoned in a house of correction for up to three months for failure to pay, and receive time on the treadmill.

I found that one-fifth of fathers issued with filiation orders in St George the Martyr, Southwark between 1822 and 1832, were sent to houses of correction either for want of sureties or for refusal to pay lying-in costs and/or weekly maintenance sums. Such sentences were often effective in either getting the men to pay up or to marry the mothers of their children. Some men might also decide to raise the child themselves.

Recovering costs was not an easy task. Bastardy books reveal the constant difficulty of recouping money from men over many years. Some fathers are even recorded as deserting to the Cape, France, the East Indies, Ireland or Scotland or simply 'abroad' to avoid paying. **H**

Dr Samantha Williams is senior lecturer in history at the University of Cambridge's Institute of Continuing Education, and author of *Unmarried Motherhood in the Metropolis, 1700–1850* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018)



A good month for...

MUSIC BUFFS

Armand D'Angour, associate professor in Classics at Oxford University, believes he has solved the mystery of how ancient Greek music was once performed. Part of the project involved designing a replica of an ancient Greek aulos (two double-reed pipes played simultaneously).

BOOK LOVERS

Archaeologists in Cologne have unearthed the foundations of what could be the oldest known library in Germany. Dating to the second century AD, it is thought the building once contained up to 20,000 scrolls.

A bad month for...



SWEDEN

Priceless items from the Swedish crown jewels have been stolen from the 13th-century Strängnäs Cathedral (above), 50 miles from Stockholm. The thieves stole two gold burial crowns and an orb, all used for royal funerals in the 17th century, and made off with the loot in a speedboat.

HISTORY IN THE NEWS

A selection of stories hitting the history headlines



New sphinx found in Egypt?

A statue boasting a lion's body with a human head has been discovered on Al-Kabbash Road, which connects the two temples of Karnak and Luxor in Egypt. Unearthed by construction workers, the statue has yet to be lifted from the ground.

Elizabeth I's secret friendship

Newly uncovered letters in the National Archives and French records have revealed the Tudor monarch was a trusted confidante to King Henri III of France. Discovered by Dr Estelle Paranke, one letter, written in 1584, warned the French king of attempts to usurp him.

WWII female pilot dies

Mary Ellis, one of the last living female Second World War pilots, has died at the age of 101. Ellis joined the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) in 1941 after hearing an advertisement for female pilots on BBC radio. She is thought to have flown around 1,000 planes during the war.

A new find at Pompeii

Excavations of a house in the Roman city of Pompeii, thought to have been home to a wealthy and cultured man, have revealed 2,000-year-old frescoes. The dwelling's atrium was surrounded by several decorated rooms.



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:
A mock-up portrait of Henri III of France with Elizabeth I; a sphinx in the Egyptian city of Luxor; Mary Ellis, pictured with a Spitfire aircraft at Biggin Hill airfield in Kent in 2015; a recently discovered fresco from the ancient city of Pompeii



The historians' view...

Is Trump really ripping up the rule book on global trade?

We're repeatedly told that the world is on the cusp of an unprecedented trade war but is there anything particularly new about Donald Trump's protectionist policies? Two historians consider the evidence

Compiled by **Chris Bowlby**, a BBC journalist specialising in history

“Trump is not as unorthodox as is commonly supposed. It is the recent political consensus in support of free trade that is the historical aberration

PROFESSOR CLIVE WEBB

Critics of President Donald Trump often claim he is a historical anomaly – that his disdain for multilateralism and his disparaging of allies are evidence of a radical departure from political tradition in the US. Yet, in many cases, he is not as unorthodox as commonly supposed. Take his support of tariffs to safeguard US manufacturers against what he sees as other countries' unfair trade policies. Trump's assertion that “protection will lead to greater prosperity” adheres to a doctrine dating back to the earliest days of the republic.

The fledgling US government used tariffs to generate revenue as early as 1789. George Washington claimed, with greater legitimacy than Trump, that national security concerns were behind the policy, as it would

ensure reliance on homegrown manufacturers for military supplies. Then came the Tariff of 1816, introduced to stem the flood of cheap British products and promote economic expansion by protecting domestic firms from overseas competitors.

The chief advocates of this protectionist philosophy were the Whigs and their Republican successors. Democrats, with an electoral base in states whose agricultural economies relied on exporting, usually argued for lower tariffs. Tensions over trade policy would actually contribute to the breakdown in relations within the US that led to the American Civil War (1861–65). Following the conflict, Republican dominance ensured protectionism as a central component of government policy, only occasionally interrupted by the Democratic administrations of Grover Cleveland and Woodrow Wilson.

Protectionism held sway well into the 20th century, and reached its apotheosis with the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930. Intended to protect US businesses and farmers suffering in the Great Depression, the imposition of high tariffs on foreign imports proved disastrously counterproductive. Other countries retaliated with their own tariffs, and international trade collapsed, worsening the already serious economic woes in the US.

While the Smoot-Hawley Act did much to show the deficiencies of protectionism, it was

the rise of a new international order after the Second World War that most influenced a redirection in US trade policy. Free trade was promoted to rebuild the ruined economies of western Europe, and thereby strengthen the Cold War alliance against the Soviet-led eastern bloc. The US became one of 23 nations in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in October 1947, which lasted until the creation of the World Trade Organization in January 1995.

In subsequent decades, the US has been an ardent advocate for free trade. However, it has not always practised what it preached. Ronald Reagan championed free trade in the 1980s, but imposed high tariffs on Japanese auto exports, while trade union influence sustained a strongly protectionist wing within the Democratic party.

It is therefore the relatively recent political consensus in support of free trade that is the historical aberration. The focus of Trump's aim might be different – China rather than Japan now being seen as America's nemesis – but the weapon he wields bears the fingerprints of many former presidents. As the trade war unleashed by the Smoot-Hawley

Act demonstrated, he should be careful it does not go off in his own hands.



Clive Webb is professor of modern American history at the University of Sussex



n – Hire American



A poster printed by the Liberal party in c1905–10 shows a “free trade shop” bustling with business, while an empty “protection shop” is hit by rates

“The post-1945 international trade system promoted free trade to create a more peaceful, prosperous and stable economic order – it is fragile now

DR MARC-WILLIAM PALEN

In the 1840s Britain turned away from protectionism and towards free trade in the hope that this would provide cheap food for the poor, open up new markets for domestic manufacturers, and foster more peaceful international trade relations. It was assumed the rest of the developing world would follow suit. But after a brief flirtation with trade liberalisation, the US, Germany, France and Russia opted for protectionism, hoping that sheltering their manufacturers from the full force of global market competition might nurture them into adulthood.

This international turn to protectionism among Britain’s competitors fuelled an anti-free trade backlash in the British empire. Groups like the Fair Trade League, the Imperial Federation League and the

Tariff Reform League sought, albeit unsuccessfully, to overturn Britain’s adherence to free trade. Radical MP Joseph Chamberlain was the charismatic figurehead of the tariff reform movement in the early 20th century. He wanted to enact retaliatory tariffs on foreign imports but promote preferential rates within the empire; impose immigration restrictions; and strengthen political and economic ties – all in the name of nationalism, workers and industries.

But what of the longer term consequences of trade conflicts? Canadian-American trade history provides a useful example. In 1866, with the US reeling from civil war and protectionism dominating the White House, the government abrogated the Reciprocity Treaty, which had promoted free trade with Canada since 1854. This set off tit-for-tat tariff increases until some US companies concluded it was cost-effective to move their production to Canada rather than pay. More than 60 manufacturing plants had relocated by the late 1880s. Far from halting outsourcing, protectionism caused it. Trade tensions then reached a breaking point the following decade when Canada responded to US high tariff walls with a double dose of tariff retaliation and closer trade ties with Britain instead of the US.

There are examples demonstrating that protectionism in the short term can benefit certain segments of an economy, such as in

the late 19th century, when it helped the struggling tin plate industry and so-called Sugar Trust in the US. But economists broadly agree that the losses today far outweigh any gains.

That’s why the post-1945 international trade system promoted free trade, to create a more peaceful, prosperous and stable economic order. And it proved quite durable, in part because the US provided leadership when needed. What makes the system so fragile now is that the US has a protectionist president, who has long expressed disdain for international alliances and economic regulatory bodies. So while Trump’s anti-globalist positions are certainly reminiscent of 19th-century Republicans or Chamberlain’s tariff reformers, his animosity toward today’s liberal economic order is unprecedented. And from this comes the uncertainty we are now witnessing. **H**



Dr Marc-William Palen is a senior lecturer in history at the University of Exeter

DISCOVER MORE

BOOKS

► **The Wealth of a Nation: A History of Trade Politics in America** by C Donald Johnson (OUP, 2018)

► **The ‘Conspiracy’ of Free Trade** by Marc-William Palen (CUP, 2017)



Sylvia strikes back

**Medical Secretary gives something
back to research and treatment**

Sylvia's friends remembered her for her kind heart, and her strong desire to help others. Even though she suffered lifelong poor health, while also caring for her critically ill mother.

But Sylvia did more than put on a brave face: she struck back against illness by working as a medical secretary, and following medical advances keenly. That's how she found out that with conditions such as stroke, the right treatment and back-up can make all the difference when given promptly.

So it's not surprising Sylvia decided that **one of the best things she could do would be to strike back again, by supporting the work of the Stroke Association – and leave us a generous gift in her Will.**

Today, we take time to remember her. Because Sylvia is still playing an important part in helping us create a future free of stroke, and turn around the lives of thousands of stroke survivors each year.

Stroke
association

Together we can conquer stroke.

Call **020 7566 1505** email **legacy@stroke.org.uk** or visit **stroke.org.uk/legacy**



Michael Wood on... **the rise of China**

“Is a reformed Confucian state the answer to the 21st-century crisis?”

“I’m just back from China. It is always instructive, and often challenging, to contemplate our world from what the great Sinologist Simon Leys called “the other pole of the human experiment”, and especially so in the era of Trump, Brexit and global wobbles of liberal democracy. Listening to China is the new necessity for political and economic thinkers, but also historians.

In Shanghai, I spent a morning with scholar diplomat Zhang Weiwei: one-time interpreter for Deng Xiaoping, doyen of Fudan and Geneva universities, National Think Tank member, and bestselling author of books on the New China. Our conversation came round to Francis Fukuyama’s *The End of History and the Last Man*.

Fukuyama’s 1992 book was a grand-sweep historical generalisation of a kind beloved of the US intelligentsia, from Samuel Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations* to recent books predicting a coming clash with China. His book ambitiously aligned with the great generalising philosophers, such as Hegel, who thought human progress would lead to a universal Enlightenment state, and Marx, who predicted communism would replace capitalism. Fukuyama argued that western liberal democracy is the “endpoint of human sociocultural evolution”, the final form of human government.

How fast time moves on! Three factors in particular have since undermined that idea. First, climate change, population growth and environmental degradation. The facts were there in 1992, but the key questions were not asked. Second, since the crash of 2008, is the sudden fragility of western liberal democracy, especially in the age of post-truth social media. The inability to agree on the public good, even when facts are clear, characterised the failure of both sides in the Trump election and also the political paralysis brought about by the Brexit vote. Suddenly progress no longer feels assured.

The third big factor is the rise of China. A while back, Weiwei publicly debated with Fukuyama, robustly defending the China model. Now under president

Xi Jinping, confidence in the Chinese way has only grown stronger; a feeling that history is not necessarily tending to the triumph of western liberal democracy.

An authoritarian one party state, China has achieved the greatest lifting out of poverty in human history and – now with major ongoing developments in its legal system, which its critics hope will improve its human rights record – is focusing on environment and climate, committed to the Paris accords. Of course proof of the pudding is in the eating – can they really do it? The ability of a centralised state to get things done gives it an advantage over fractious liberal democracies, however uncomfortable that may be for the rest of us. Could the answer to the 21st-century crisis be a reformed Confucian state, a rationally organised bureaucracy without class distinctions? A socialist-capitalist synthesis?

Gazing over the Shanghai skyline, I put that to Weiwei, whose debate with Fukuyama is now in print. The China model for him is growing in conviction. “China is now the world’s largest laboratory for political, social and economic reforms. My native city Shanghai has now overtaken New York in many ways: infrastructure and transport, hardware and software, life expectancy and infant mortality, even in safety for young women at night.” He smiled: “Frankly speaking the US political system has its roots in the pre-industrial era and urgently needs reform, as much if not more so than China. The separation of powers cannot address the major problems in American society. They need a new system of checks and balances.”

He also had a word for Britain, where most would agree the archaic parliamentary system needs urgent overhaul. “Consultative democracy is the Chinese way we are developing. I recommend it to the UK,” he said with a wry smile. “A plebiscite is too primitive, too blunt an instrument. I would advise against its use in a complex society. But we mustn’t lose historical perspective, whether in China or in Britain?”

The End of History? Not quite yet I think. **H**

Michael Wood

is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. He has presented numerous BBC series and his books include *The Story of India* (BBC, 2007)



ILLUSTRATION BY FEMKE DE JONG

LETTERS

Medieval monkey doctors

LETTER OF THE MONTH

I enjoyed your recent cover story (*Medieval Medicine: Killer or Cure?*, September 2018) and would like to draw your attention to the stained glass in York Minster. I refer here to a small detail in the border of one of the Minster's medieval stained glass windows. This shows a doctor holding up a flask of urine to help him diagnose the condition of the patient in front of him. It closely echoes



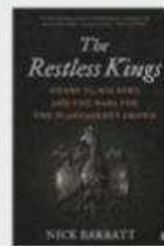
A medieval stained glass window at York Minster parodies a doctor and patient

your main picture for the article and I attach a photo of the detail (below left).

The doctor and patient shown in this window are both portrayed as monkeys and I understand that the use of monkeys in medieval iconography indicates that what is shown is intended as a parody. If that's correct, then the makers of the window were intending to mock the 14th-century medical profession and I can't say I blame them! But, curiously, an adjoining detail in the same window shows monkeys taking part in the funeral of the Virgin Mary and I am at a bit of a loss to see why they would wish to parody that!

Rob Stay, York

● We reward the Letter of the Month writer with a new history book. This issue, it's *The Restless Kings* by Nick Barratt. Read the review on page 87.



against the Ottoman empire in the First World War. As well as being the only female at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, she was the first woman to write a parliamentary white paper and she had a critical role as a participant at the 1921 Cairo Conference.

When not 'changing the world' she sourced new Alpine routes, had a peak named after her, mapped out Middle East antiquities, pioneered architectural photography, and founded the National Library of Iraq and the Baghdad Museum.

When she died, George V ranked her with Florence Nightingale and Marie Curie, but apparently she is not influential enough for *BBC History Magazine*.

Ged Parker, Washington

A woman of great bravery

I just opened the latest magazine and was drawn to the *100 Women* poll. I was looking for the US author and political activist Helen Keller and I was most disappointed not to see her nominated. She was a woman of the greatest bravery who deserves universal acclaim.

David Gold, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

It's just not cricket!

Jonathan Healey's article (*What Sparked the Civil War?*, August) contained an important mistake. On page 25 you reproduced a 17th-century etching (below) by the Bohemian engraver Wenceslaus Hollar, depicting a riot at St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, which broke out when officials tried to introduce a new English-style prayer book. The original caption was misquoted in your magazine, particularly the term "cricket bats".

The original caption actually read: "The Arch-Prelate of St Andrews in



Some surprising omissions

I found your recent poll (*100 Women Who Changed the World*, September) fascinating – although I'm kicking myself for not getting round to voting.

No doubt, like many others, my own list would be different and in a different order. But I am pleased to see several of my top women on the list including Aphra Behn, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Catherine de Medici, Mary Wollstonecraft and Ada Lovelace. I am also very surprised at some omissions, including Nancy Astor (the first female MP to take her seat), Beatrice Rathbone and several other female politicians and suffragists.

With the exception of cricketer Rachael Heyhoe Flint, I would exclude all sportswomen, as their inclusion panders to over-glorification of sport. I also find it extraordinary that Diana, Princess of Wales is on the list. Her inclusion plays up to her popular celebrity and victim status. And on the subject of royalty, I find the omission of Queen Elizabeth I extraordinary. She demonstrated how a woman could triumph in a man's world and during her reign this country was transformed.

Another glaring omission is Beatrix Potter – so much more than a successful and accomplished author, but also a pioneering environmentalist and leading expert on mushrooms and fungi.

I hope the poll stimulates a lively and continuing debate.

Marilyn Liddicoat, Cornwall

Where are these black pioneers?

There isn't enough room for everyone in *100 Women Who Changed the World*, but two pioneering black women who made an impact in Britain should be acknowledged. The Jamaican feminist, poet and broadcaster Una Marson (1905–65) and the Trinidadian journalist and activist Claudia Jones (1915–64) who co-founded the Notting Hill Carnival. I was partly responsible for Una being honoured with a Southwark Blue Plaque.

Stephen Bourne, London

Bell was a world-changer

I'm staggered your nominees failed to include Gertrude Bell (1868–1926), the most influential female diplomat of all time: she played a critical part in securing the support of Arab tribes



Our readers query why diplomat Gertrude Bell (left), political activist Claudia Jones (above left) and educator Helen Keller (above right) did not figure in our *100 Women Who Changed the World* poll

Scotland reading the new Service-book in his pontificalibus assaulted by men & women, with Cricketts stooles Sticks and Stones.” The term “Cricketts” referred to a particular type of small stool, certainly not a cricket bat. There are no reliable authentic references to the game of cricket in Scotland until at least 1771.

Aidan Haile, Northallerton

Churchill's health plan

Roger Morris is incorrect when he says that Winston Churchill did all he could to “squash” the NHS (*Letters*, September). Speaking in 1944 as prime minister he said: “Our policy is to create a national health service, in order to ensure that everybody in the country, irrespective of means, age, sex or occupation, shall have equal opportunities to benefit from the best and most up-to-date medical and allied services available.” And the Conservative party's 1945 general election manifesto went on to promise: “The health services of the country will be made available to all citizens... no one will be denied the attention, the treatment or the appliances he requires because he cannot afford them.”

The most virulent opposition to the creation of the NHS came from the British Medical Association, a former secretary of which likened it to “a first step, and a big one, to national socialism as practised in Germany”.

Charles Ellis, St Albans

Teaching the Holocaust

While I agree with Michael Wood that the Holocaust should never be forgotten (*Opinion*, August), I disagree that not enough emphasis is placed on it in schools. I have just finished my A-levels and have found from my schooling that if any subject within history has been emphasised most it has been the Holocaust and the Second World War. The continual focus almost put me off GCSE history even though history is my passion. I don't believe that the issue is that the Holocaust is not being studied at school. The UCL Centre for Holocaust Education study – which Wood mentions – states that “by Year 10, 85 per cent of students reported that they had learned about the Holocaust within school”.

Not enough emphasis is placed on teaching children the issues and consequences of racism and anti-Semitism. The Holocaust should be a priority but there are other periods which are almost completely ignored such as the effects of the British empire.

Tamsin Ferguson, Somerset

WRITE TO US

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SOCIAL MEDIA

What you've been saying on Twitter and Facebook



Students scrubbed Rudyard Kipling's 'If' off a university wall, saying he was “racist”. Is it ever right to erase work when a historical figure's reputation is revised by modern standards?

@Diane_toller I don't think their work should be erased. It's history. We need to learn from it. Kipling came from a different era. Places of learning should stop putting the written word, by anyone, on walls.

@ShahidMohmand79 Kipling, like all of us, was a product of his time. Trying to re-invent him or his work as per today's requirements would be atrocious and an utter travesty.

@humanisthobbit It is impossible to take any artist, scientist, writer and leader out of their time to choose what we find palatable without dealing with their generation's prejudices, racism and gender stereotypes. We must see them in their historical context.

@maddie_foster98 It isn't erasing history. The poem still exists. There is a difference between acknowledgement/representation and celebration. Students have a right to choose what celebrates their communal values. It's about time that BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic) art was celebrated.

@Gabe55Gabe It is wrong to try to remove historical work because its author or constructor offends our modern views but there should be more education about the darker side of our past 'idols' and 'heroes'.

@RobAKemp1966 No, the past is the past and we must learn from it. Otherwise, how are we to evolve? Learn about Kipling, the times and locations of his life. He also wrote *The Jungle Book* – would you erase that and his other great works?

@katydid_alot Erase? No. But wiser heads should have prevailed before putting it up. Such works should be consigned to historical study and we ought not cling to an inglorious past.

@dollidancer The important thing is to study why people thought that way at the time so that students, or anyone, can understand how and why views change.

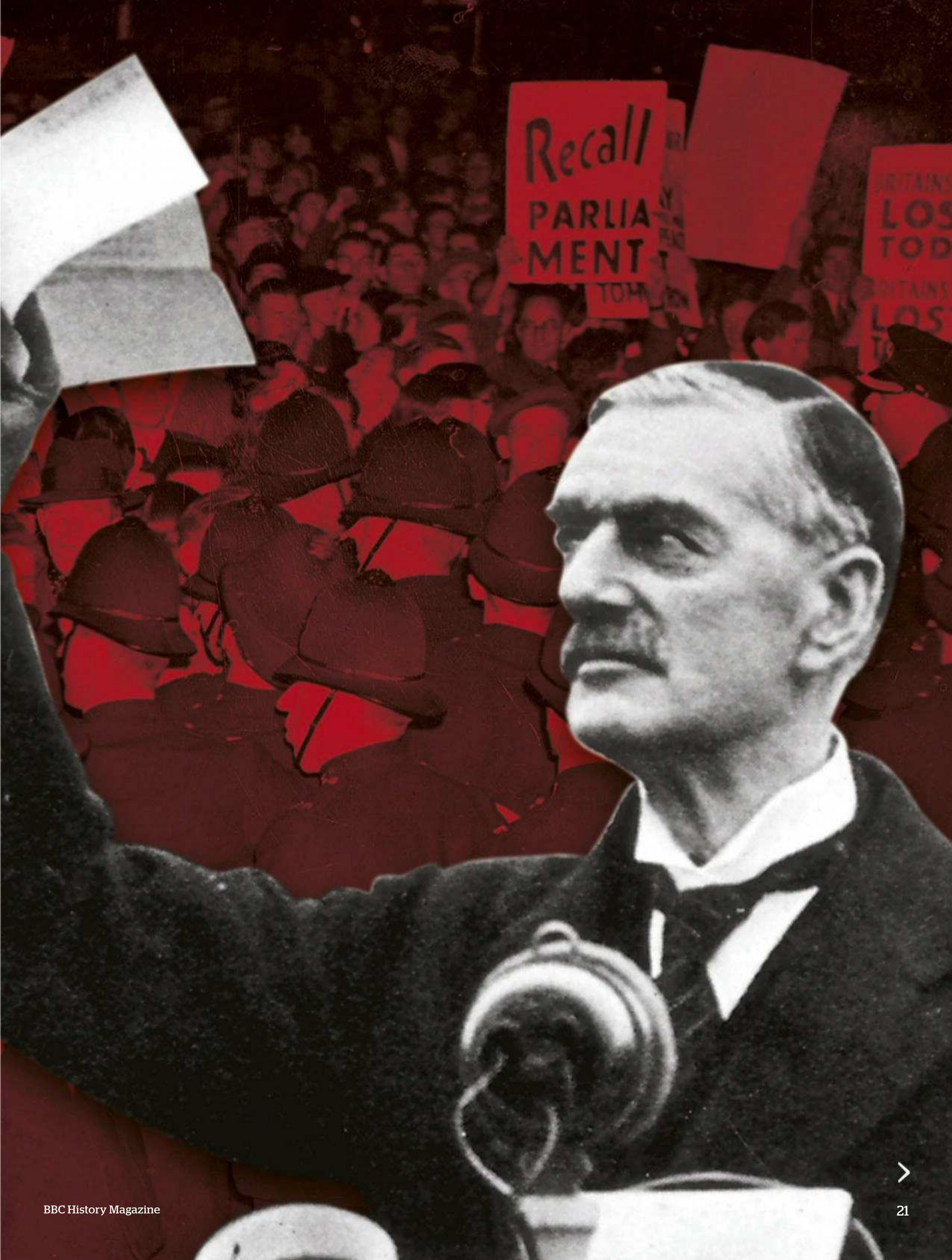
The Munich crisis 80 years on

Adolf Hitler wasn't **Neville Chamberlain's** only foe during the Munich crisis of 1938. With **Winston Churchill** raging, Lord Halifax covering his own back, and protestors on the streets, the quest for '**peace for our time**' almost brought down the British government

By Robert Crowcroft

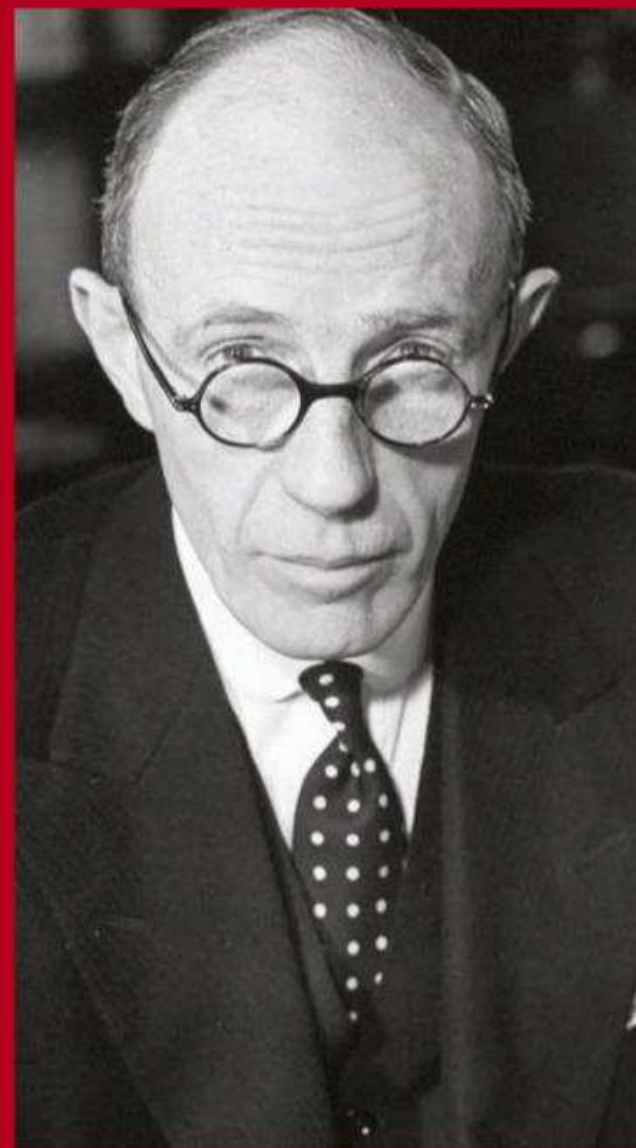
Pyrrhic victory
Neville Chamberlain holds aloft the famous piece of paper at Heston aerodrome on 30 September 1938. The background image shows people demonstrating against British concessions to Hitler, Whitehall, 22 September

ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES





Winston Churchill – pictured in his country home, Chartwell in Kent, in 1939 – believed that the only way he would be invited back into government was if “the foreign situation darkened”



Foreign secretary Lord Halifax distanced himself from the prime minister in late 1938

On 30 September 1938 the British prime minister Neville Chamberlain climbed out of an aeroplane at Heston aerodrome in London.

Waiting for him on the tarmac were journalists and photographers. Chamberlain had just returned from a summit with Adolf Hitler in Munich, and his mood was one of triumph. The prime minister believed he had pulled off a diplomatic coup that would prevent a devastating European war. He brandished a piece of paper bearing Hitler’s signature, an image captured by the photographers and destined to become one of the iconic visual records of the century. Later, in Downing Street, Chamberlain boasted that the settlement he negotiated represented nothing less than “peace for our time”.

September sees the 80th anniversary of the infamous Munich agreement. It was reached in response to Nazi Germany’s demand to annex those border regions of neighbouring Czechoslovakia home to 3 million ethnic Germans. Hitler threatened to simply march his forces across the frontier and seize the disputed territory, the Sudetenland. It seemed likely that Britain, France and the Soviet Union would all be dragged in should conflict erupt.

Throughout September, Chamberlain engaged in frantic diplomacy, travelling to Germany three times to broker a peaceful solution. At Munich on 29 September he agreed to the incorporation of the Sudetenland into the Reich while securing Hitler’s recognition of the independence of the rest of the Czech state. The prime minister hoped this would mark the dawn of a new era of European stability.

Yet Munich rapidly became symbolic of the dangers of appeasing aggressive governments. The agreement unravelled and Hitler seized the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, a crucial stage on the road to the Second World War. Nowadays Munich occupies a place in the popular imagination as the moment when a chance to marshal resistance to Hitler was lost, and an example of the folly of trusting the unscrupulous.

What is perhaps less familiar is the deep political crisis in Britain provoked by Hitler’s

designs on the Sudetenland. Chamberlain’s diplomacy sparked a revolt in the ruling Conservative party – and even inside his own cabinet. Westminster was gripped by intrigue, and there seemed a real possibility that the prime minister could fall. Despite the likelihood of a European war, politicians still usually perceived matters through the lens of their own interests and prospects. And this political struggle had an important effect on British diplomacy, as well.

Political disasters

At the heart of the crisis was the foreign secretary, Lord Halifax. At first sight this seems strange. Halifax was just as responsible as Chamberlain for the direction of British foreign policy, and a longstanding advocate of accommodating German ambitions through concession. Yet, by September 1938, Halifax was a worried man. He sensed that public opinion was tiring of ineffective conciliation abroad. Allowing Britain to appear weak in the face of Hitler’s behaviour could prove politically disastrous at the general election due to take place within the next two years. The government lost several parliamentary seats at byelections earlier in the year, while



The *Daily Express* gives the Munich agreement a rapturous reception on 30 September 1938



Adolf Hitler, Neville Chamberlain (centre) and German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop (right) in Munich. The diplomatic ground that the prime minister ceded during his visits to Germany appalled many of his colleagues back home

the opposition Labour party and growing numbers of newspapers were quick to draw attention to its difficulties abroad. This was compounded by critics on the Conservative backbenches in the House of Commons, most notably Winston Churchill. As if that was not bad enough, Chamberlain himself came across as pompous and sarcastic.

Halifax feared that the government had “lost touch with the floating vote”. He resolved it was politically essential to correct the popular perception of flaccidity in foreign policy. When it became apparent on 7 September that a German invasion of Czechoslovakia was imminent, Halifax seized the opportunity to distance himself from Chamberlain – and the policies of which he himself had been an architect. He likened himself to “groping in the dark like a blind man trying to find his way across a bog”. Indicating a new willingness to resist Germany, the foreign secretary pressed Chamberlain to dispatch a message to Hitler threatening war over Czechoslovakia. The prime minister was angry and believed that Halifax was “going off his head”, but could not afford to be isolated by a rift with his closest ally.

Chamberlain was also conscious that “many others”, including Churchill, were lining up to exploit the crisis. Still, he was determined that he alone would make British policy. So he devised an idea that, he said,

Labour and Tory rebels were in full cry against Chamberlain’s “shameful surrender”

“took Halifax’s breath away”: he would fly to Germany to meet Hitler face-to-face. Chamberlain returned to London on 16 September with Hitler’s agreement to hold plebiscites in the Sudetenland in order to verify that the inhabitants wished to join the Reich.

Chamberlain admitted that he “didn’t care two hoots” where the Sudeten Germans lived; he simply aimed to avoid war. Several members of the cabinet were unhappy that Britain was involved in carving up a democratic state, and expressed a desire for a “different” policy. Yet when Chamberlain coldly demanded “and what policy is that?”, they had no answer.

Problems arose when Chamberlain returned to Germany on 22 September. Encouraged by the prime minister’s willingness to accede to his demands, Hitler changed his mind and insisted on the

immediate absorption of the Sudetenland. Panicking, Chamberlain asked the führer to be reasonable: he had “taken his political life in his hands” in pursuit of a deal, and public opinion would turn against him. Hitler was unmoved by Chamberlain’s pleas.

Over in London, meanwhile, Halifax’s doubts continued to gnaw at him. A protest march on 22 September drew thousands of people onto the streets of Westminster. There were demands that “Chamberlain must go”. The newspapers were hostile, while both the Labour party and Conservative rebels were in full cry in warning against a “shameful surrender”. MP Harold Nicolson raged: “This is hell. It is the end of the British empire.” In private, Winston Churchill was excited, knowing that the only way he would ever be invited to return to office was if a new government was “forced upon us” should “the foreign situation darken”. Even loyal Conservatives were “appalled by the force of opinion”, as one MP noted.

All of this made a major impression on Halifax. When he heard that Chamberlain’s response to Hitler’s intransigence had been to offer him yet more Czech territory, he sent a telegram to the prime minister saying that he was “profoundly disturbed”. He advised Chamberlain that the “great mass” of opinion both in parliament and the country felt that “we have gone to the limit of concession”. He wanted Czechoslovakia to



ABOVE: “We thank our leader,” declares a German propaganda postcard celebrating Nazi victory in elections in the Sudetenland, December 1938

LEFT: Residents of a Sudetenland town greet German troops in October 1938. The Munich agreement had seen Britain giving its assent to the Nazi absorption of German-speaking areas of Czechoslovakia

mobilise its army and for the prime minister to warn Hitler that Britain would fight.

Halifax’s own civil servants in the Foreign Office recognised that, for “internal political reasons”, British strategy had to be radically amended. Moreover, as his biographer Andrew Roberts observes, Halifax would have had to be “superhuman” not to at least entertain the notion that resisting Chamberlain might lead to him becoming prime minister himself.

Chamberlain raced home to London a couple of days later in order to confront his cabinet. The stage was set for a showdown between the prime minister and the foreign secretary. Halifax endured a sleepless night before deciding to come out against Chamberlain. At the crucial cabinet meeting the next day, he carefully explained that he was “not quite sure” that he and Chamberlain were “still working as one”. He also made clear his opposition to the prime minister’s policy. This was a political hand grenade tossed into Chamberlain’s lap, who lamented it as “a horrible blow”.

Halifax argued that if the Czechs chose to resist Germany, Britain and France should fight with them. His stance was probably rooted more in politics – anxiety about how the government was perceived at home – than strategic disagreement with Chamberlain. He believed that there loomed a confrontation in eastern Europe between Germany and the

A Chamberlain supporter stated that Halifax possessed “eel-like qualities” and a capacity for “sublime treachery”

Soviet Union that Britain should steer clear of. Yet now he declared that “the ultimate aim” of policy should be the “destruction of Nazism”. Cynics thought this rather opportunistic. One of Chamberlain’s friends concluded that Halifax possessed “eel-like qualities” and a capacity for “sublime treachery”. Yet this was a climate in which several cabinet ministers were contemplating resignation, and backbench critics including Churchill and another future prime minister, Harold Macmillan, were preparing to press for a new government if “Chamberlain rats again”.

The prime minister felt “all over the place” and, seeing little alternative, agreed to send a stern warning to Hitler. The armed forces were mobilised, gas masks were distributed among the civilian population, and anti-aircraft guns were deployed in central London. Chamberlain then dispatched his

most trusted aide, the civil servant Sir Horace Wilson, to Germany to see Hitler on his behalf. Wilson warned the führer that the “situation in England” was “extremely serious”, and a new government might declare war. The outbreak of a major conflict seemed likely – and over a border that few in Britain actually considered a vital national interest. It was an extraordinary situation. To a considerable extent, it was a product of high-political conflict at Westminster.

A smouldering volcano

On the afternoon of 28 September, Chamberlain went to the House of Commons to explain his policy. He knew his future was at stake. Churchill was planning to strike openly at him, and others would likely do the same. While the prime minister spoke for an hour, Churchill sat on the backbenches smouldering like a volcano. So many MPs passed him notes urging him to attack the government that he had to tie them all together with an elastic band.

Towards the end of Chamberlain’s speech, however, another note appeared. Hastily passed along the front bench to the prime minister, the folded piece of paper carried a new offer from Hitler. The führer was convening a conference, to be held at Munich the next day. One observer noted that, having read it, Chamberlain’s “whole face, his whole body, seemed to change... he



The news that Britain is at war with Germany is proclaimed in London, 3 September 1939. Neville Chamberlain's government would fall just eight months later

appeared 10 years younger and triumphant”.

Considering the matter for a moment, the prime minister relayed this news to the chamber. Hitler had backed down. The relief was palpable. MPs on both sides of the house suddenly erupted into a roar of spontaneous cheering. Harold Nicolson thought it was “one of the most dramatic moments I have ever witnessed”. When the prime minister took his seat, “the whole house rose as a man to pay tribute”. Chamberlain told his sister that it was “a piece of drama that no work of fiction has ever surpassed”. Churchill, in contrast, “looked very much upset”.

Dashing to Munich to meet Hitler for the third – and final – time, on 29 September, Chamberlain entered into a 14-hour negotiation completed in the middle of the night. Under the agreement, the German-speaking areas of the Sudetenland were to be incorporated into the Reich and an international commission would oversee plebiscites elsewhere along the border. Chamberlain and Hitler also signed the Anglo-German declaration affirming “the desire of our two peoples never to go to war again”. The prime minister returned home a national hero.

Chamberlain had escaped the trap his political rivals had set for him. True to form, many of them interpreted the Munich agreement in terms of what it meant for their

own prospects. Some feared Chamberlain would call a snap general election in which he would romp to victory. A panicked Churchill explored building an alliance with Labour, the Liberals and rebel Conservatives, proposing that a commitment to the League of Nations and “collective security” might form the basis for a joint campaign. When Macmillan protested: “That is not our jargon,” Churchill roared back: “It is a jargon we may all have to learn!”

The choice of evils

The prime minister’s spectacular triumph proved fleeting. Within weeks, the Munich settlement unravelled. The plebiscites were never held and Hitler simply absorbed the disputed territories. Some had predicted this all along. Indeed, Halifax hardly offered a ringing endorsement of Munich when he publicly described the agreement as merely the best “of a hideous choice of evils”. Churchill predicted: “This is only the beginning of the reckoning.”

In March 1939 Czechoslovakia was absorbed into the Reich. In the aftermath, Halifax forced a weakened Chamberlain to erect a series of military tripwires in the form of British guarantees of Poland, Greece and Romania. Halifax again calculated that a show of British strength was essential – both for peace abroad and political stability at home. These guarantees paved the way for

the declaration of war in September 1939, and the fall of Chamberlain eight months later (by the end of 1940, he was dead).

The Munich agreement is entrenched in popular memory as a diplomatic disaster and a source of enduring lessons for the future. The political crisis in Britain provoked by Hitler’s ambitions towards the Sudetenland is much less familiar. Yet it was one of the most consequential of the century. It highlights that, even in moments of great danger, politicians will naturally look out for themselves. However it also reminds us to pay close attention to the interaction between foreign and domestic policy. More often than we might imagine, these two are intertwined. **H**

Robert Crowcroft is a senior lecturer in contemporary history at Edinburgh University

ON THE PODCAST

Historical novelist Robert Harris discussed the Munich crisis of 1938 on our podcast. To listen to this episode, go to [historyextra.com/period/second-world-war/the-munich-conference](https://www.historyextra.com/period/second-world-war/the-munich-conference)

DISCOVER MORE

MAGAZINE

► Read more on the Munich crisis in issue 12 of **BBC World Histories** magazine. For further details, go to [historyextra.com/bbc-world-histories-magazine](https://www.historyextra.com/bbc-world-histories-magazine)

Our illustration shows Thomas Boleyn, whose flair for diplomacy and mastery of languages made him one of Henry VIII's most trusted ambassadors



COVER STORY

The father of the bride

In the eyes of many of his contemporaries, Thomas Boleyn was a callous opportunist, willing to sacrifice his daughter, Anne, on the altar of his own ambition. But is this verdict fair?

Lauren Mackay explores the life of the controversial head of the Boleyn family

ILLUSTRATION BY SEAM MCSORLEY



With the help of her upwardly mobile father, the young Anne Boleyn circulated in some of the most sophisticated courts on the continent

The Boleyns

“In no country but England,” wrote the historian TL Kington Oliphant, “could a race of merchants have risen in the feudal times to the highest rank under the crown... and have wedded ladies of the blood.”

This is the story of many great English families, but it has particular resonance for the Boleyns. Through their industry and talents, they accrued great wealth and influence, entwining themselves with some of the mightiest families in the realm. They rose to such heights that two of their own came to be queens of England: Anne Boleyn and her daughter, Elizabeth I.

But this is also a story with a dark side. Anne was famously – infamously – beheaded for treason, the first English queen to be publicly executed. Her brother, George, fared no better, going to the block two days before her, charged with the same crime – the victim of the same scandal.

In the wake of such grisly events, the Boleyn name seemed to offer a moral lesson in what could happen to those whose ambition enticed them to rise ‘above their station’. History has relegated the story of the Boleyns to a soap opera – and Anne’s father, Thomas, is often the villain of the piece, widely derided as a callous, grasping courtier who would stop at nothing to advance his own interests.

Such accusations were first levelled at Thomas during his own lifetime, put about by supporters of Henry VIII’s first queen, Catherine of Aragon, who despised Anne. And those accusations stuck. One modern historian famously remarked that, on his way to an earldom, Thomas “slipped, or appears to have slipped, two daughters in succession into the king’s bed”. (The other daughter was Anne’s sister, Mary, who was Henry VIII’s mistress, and may have borne him two children).

But of all the barbs directed at Thomas, perhaps the most damaging is the one that he blithely accepted the deaths of Anne and his son and heir, George, as collateral damage in his quest for power. Fact or fabrication, this version of events has gained a good deal of traction down the centuries. But has history been fair to Thomas? Was he really the callous opportunist of popular perception?

Norman roots

The Boleyns could trace their ancestry back to the early Middle Ages. It is generally believed that they descended from Count Eustace II of Boulogne in northern France, who arrived in England in the 11th century, setting down roots as he formed an alliance with the conquering Normans. Thomas’s branch of the family settled in Salle, Norfolk in the 13th century, becoming important patrons

CLEOPHAS FRATER CARNALIS IO-
SEPHI MARITI DIVAE VIRG MARIE

JACOBVS MINOR EPVS MARIA CLEOPHAE SOROR
HIEROSOLIMITANVS VIRG MAR PUTATNA MA-
TERTERA D N

A c1515–20 painting of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I and his family. Thomas Boleyn struck up a close relationship with Maximilian’s daughter, Margaret of Austria, during his time as ambassador to her court

History has
relegated the story
of the Boleyns to
a soap opera, **and**
Thomas is often the
villain of the piece

Allies of Catherine of Aragon, depicted in c1530, were quick to traduce Thomas Boleyn

of the town and its church. Over several generations, they extended the family’s local fortunes, foraying into trade, commerce and land acquisition.

When Thomas was born in 1477, he was raised in a milieu of wealth and privilege, the son of doting parents who invested heavily in his future. They encouraged his scholarly pursuits by engaging private tutors and nurtured his keen intelligence and flair for languages, particularly French. We catch a glimpse of a young man in 1497, aged 20, standing alongside his father William as a part of the Kentish contingent of Henry VII’s army facing 30,000 Cornish rebels. For Thomas it was an honourable, and victorious, initiation into manhood.

Henry VII’s style of kingship would transform Thomas’s fortunes. The first Tudor monarch chose his new courtiers primarily on merit, snubbing the hereditary lords who dominated England during the reign of the Yorkist Edward IV. The ‘new men’, of which Thomas was indisputably one, were educated, intelligent, ambitious and all too eager to advance themselves through service to the king. Thomas was appointed to a number of increasingly senior positions in the royal household, developing a reputation as a loyal and reliable courtier.

His star waxed further when Henry VIII came to the throne in



ABOVE: Henry VIII, shown in a c1520 portrait, grew besotted with Anne Boleyn – and nothing, not even her reluctant father, could stop him marrying her



RIGHT: A scene from the wedding of Henry VIII's sister Mary Tudor to King Louis XII of France. Anne Boleyn was summoned to attend Mary's court after the marriage

1509, his reputation as a skilled sportsman – one who often participated in jousting and wrestling tournaments – endearing him to the new king.

While many of Henry VIII's courtiers sought glory in military campaigns, Thomas's mastery of languages and penchant for diplomacy pushed him down a different path. The ever-changing balance of power in Europe threatened the peace, as a cohort of ambitious young monarchs, Henry among them, sought to expand their territory and influence. Keeping these realms on side was a delicate task for Henry's chief architect of foreign policy, Richard Fox. He advised Henry to form a select group of ambassadors to protect England's interests at the courts of Europe – and Thomas was to be among them. In 1512 he was appointed ambassador to the court of Margaret of Austria, the Holy Roman Emperor's daughter, in Mechelen, modern-day Belgium.

The pressure is on

The appointment catapulted Thomas into the heart of the greatest empire in Europe – and, in Archduchess Margaret, he would be dealing with one of the most powerful women on the continent. Margaret's father, the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian, had expanded his territories into Spain, Italy and parts of modern-day Germany, Austria and Switzerland, and had made his daughter

governor of the Low Countries. Now he empowered her to negotiate a treaty with England in his absence. For Thomas, the pressure was well and truly on.

Luckily he had a natural talent for negotiations. Thomas was keen to make his voice heard, preferring to use a frank approach in his dispatches to the king. When negotiations began to stall, Thomas reported that he regretted not having anything more substantial to send Henry but “fair promises and sweet words when spending the king's money but doing him no good”.

Just as importantly, Thomas struck up a warm relationship with Margaret. In fact, the archduchess favoured Thomas above his colleagues, choosing to negotiate with him personally. While they waited for the commission giving her the power to draw up a treaty against France, Margaret proposed to Thomas that they wager on whether the commission would arrive within 10 days: if she lost, Margaret would give Thomas a Spanish courser (a type of horse); if he lost, he would give her a small horse, known as a hobby. The commission arrived 10 days late, and so Thomas won the bet.

By this time, Thomas had three young children, including two daughters of whom he no doubt spoke a great deal. Margaret offered one of those daughters, Anne, a place at Mechelen – one of Europe's most sophisti-

cated courts – the domain of musicians, artists and philosophers. It was a hugely generous gesture, and testament to the closeness of Margaret's relationship with Thomas.

Thomas trusted his daughter to conduct herself well and bring honour to the family. She would learn desirable courtly skills to set her apart from other ladies of the English court and make her a desirable match for any noble family. Thomas also saw in Margaret a role model for his daughter: powerful in her own right, intelligent and respected. We know that Margaret became fond of her young charge and wrote warmly to Thomas that she found Anne “so bright and pleasant for her young age that I am more beholden to you for sending her to me than you are to me”.

Margaret was less pleased when she received a letter from Thomas months later, asking that Anne be released from her court. King Henry was marrying his sister, Mary Tudor, to King Louis XII of France, and Anne would be needed to attend upon her. Thomas admitted to Margaret that: “To this request [for Anne] I could not, nor did I know how to refuse”.

Anne, however, seemed excited, writing to her father: “Sir, I understand by your letter that you desire that I shall be a worthy woman when I come to the court and you inform me that the queen will take the trouble to converse with me, which rejoices me much to



The refined Marguerite of Navarre, shown in a contemporary portrait, proved a powerful role model for Anne Boleyn during her time in the French court

BELOW: Thomas Boleyn secured Anne a position attending French queen Claude, shown (centre) with her mother-in-law Louise of Savoy (back left) and daughters in a 16th-century illumination



think of talking with a person so wise and worthy... I promise you that my love is based on such great strength that it will never grow less." Anne clearly adored her father, and her earnest desire to please him and earn his respect is clear. We do not have any responses from Thomas, but the fact that he kept this letter throughout his life, perfectly preserved, speaks to his deep affection for his daughter.

King Louis and Mary Tudor were married on 9 October 1514. Less than three months later, however, it was over, the 52-year-old king succumbing to a severe case of gout on 1 January 1515. Anne was soon on the move again, her father securing her a position with Queen Claude, wife of the newly anointed King Francis I. Anne would spend seven years at the French court, reuniting with her father on his various lengthy embassies to France.

Anne's royal role model

By now Thomas was a highly respected ambassador, and soon forged a close friendship with King Francis and his mother, the formidable Louise of Savoy, as well as his sister, Marguerite of Navarre. His influence in the French court allowed him to keep an eye on his daughter, and he rented rooms near the French court in Poissy, likely so Anne could stay with him when she was able.

Thomas continued to guide his daughter and may have even helped her cultivate

Thomas intended his daughter to take a prominent place at the English court... **he did not raise her to share the king's bed**

relationships with the influential members of court, in particular Marguerite. Highly literate and famously beautiful, Marguerite was another educated and progressive role model for Anne. Her court sphere boasted some of the greatest musicians, poets and artists of the day, including Leonardo da Vinci. Few young women could boast such an impressive education or exposure to such influential individuals and ideas of the age.

When Anne finally returned to England, she was not only highly spirited and attractive but, like her father, well-read, linguistically gifted, fashionable, sophisticated and well versed in poetry, music and philosophy.

No one, however, could have foreseen that such talents would capture the attention of a

married king. Thomas had intended his daughter to become an imposing woman in her own right, poised to take a prominent place at the English court. He did not raise her to share the king's bed – she deserved better than the life of a royal mistress. As Henry pursued Anne, Thomas removed her from court, taking her to the family seat at Hever Castle in Kent in the vain hope that Henry's eye would alight elsewhere. It didn't.

Anne was clever enough to refuse Henry's advances, but in the end, the king's wishes prevailed. His offer to her would be radically upgraded: from mistress to wife. Thomas could not defy Henry and had no option but to support his daughter's marriage to the king.

Disgrace and death

Henry's annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon was deeply unpopular – and that put a strain not only on his relationship with Anne, but also on Anne's relationship with her family. On the eve of her coronation in 1533, father and daughter fought publicly, for a heavily pregnant Anne seemed self-conscious and uncertain, letting out her gowns to cover and hide her growing belly. Thomas told her to leave the gowns as they were, that "she should be thankful to God for the state she was in, and to take away the piece she had put on her dress, to denote her impending motherhood". Anne snapped

that she was in a better plight than he would have wished her to be. With the crushing expectation that the baby she carried would be the heir Henry craved, tempers were fraying.

There had already been disagreements between Boleyns over spiritual and political matters. Anne and George were interested in new learning (humanism – as it would be dubbed later) while Thomas remained conventionally spiritual and pious. When Thomas interceded for a Catholic priest accused of fraud and condemned to death, Anne publicly berated her father, declaring that there were too many priests in England.

Given the tumultuous times through which the Boleyns lived – the fall of Catherine of Aragon, religious upheaval, Henry's determination to punish anyone who opposed him – such friction was, perhaps, inevitable. It does not change the fact that throughout Anne's reign the Boleyns remained a close-knit family, united against their enemies at court.

We have no evidence of Thomas's state of mind at the disgrace and deaths of George and Anne, although we can assume he left the court to grieve for some time. He did not have particularly cordial relationships with those involved in the downfall of his children. Henry VIII's chief minister, Thomas Cromwell, was terse and to the point, and on several occasions made his life difficult. There was hostility between Thomas and his brother-in-law, the Duke of Norfolk, who presided over the trials of his children – their relationship did not survive the summer of 1536. However Thomas remained dedicated in his service to the crown, performing official duties when commanded.

Throughout her lifetime, Thomas had been steadfastly dedicated to his daughter's cause. The tragedy of their story is that they were ultimately torn apart, not by their ambition – as their detractors would have it – but by the man who had relentlessly pursued Anne and raised her to exalted heights in the first place: Henry VIII. **H**

Lauren Mackay is a historian specialising in Tudor England. Her latest book is *Among the Wolves of Court: The Untold Story of Thomas and George Boleyn* (IB Tauris, 2018). For more information, go to laurenmackay.co.uk

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The other Boleyn boy

How political machinations cost Anne Boleyn's faithful brother, George, his life

George Boleyn remains elusive through the distant mirror of the centuries, often pushed to the sidelines. For 500 years he has lived in the shadows of his more glamorous sisters – and, until his arrest for treason in the spring of 1536, he did exactly the same in his own lifetime.

As a young man, George sought to carve out a career as a diplomat – with help, no doubt, from his father – but struggled to be taken seriously. Every advance he made in his career was attributed, not to his own merits, but the influence of his royal sister.

In fact, George was an intelligent, literate and artistic young man with a flair for languages and a charismatic personality. He loved jousting and hawking, and cultivated a reputation for being a skilled sportsman, much like his father.

George ultimately became a central member of the colourful circle of courtiers who surrounded his sister Anne as queen. The pair were close and similar in temperament, sharing the same intellectual and aesthetic interests, and developing a passion for 'new learning' – the liberation from the old dominant way of thinking – that was inspired by the Renaissance.

Perhaps the strongest evidence of their bond can be found in two religious texts by the French humanist Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, which Anne asked her brother to translate. These beautifully bound works from George to Anne still survive in the British Library, and not only suggest was man capable of deep spirituality, but also a devoted brother.

In his dedication, George wrote: "I have been so bold to send unto you, not jewels or gold, whereof you have plenty, not pearl or rich stones, whereof you have enough, but a rude translation of a well-willer, a goodly matter meanly handled, most humbly desiring you with favour to weigh the weakness of my dull wit."

As the cracks in Anne's marriage to Henry began to widen, George was one of the few people Anne could trust. Her brother now carried the responsibility of protecting his sister, advising her to be guarded with her sometimes imprudent comments. But George, too, could be rash and careless, at one stage mocking the king's virility, joking that Henry was unable to copulate with any woman.

These comments would come back to haunt

George when the Boleyns' enemies made their move against the family. George was charged with incest with his sister and of plotting to kill the king. He remained defiant at his trial, declaring his innocence, and defending himself well.

But the verdict had been decided before the trial even commenced. George was probably responsible for the carving (shown above) of Anne's white falcon that still adorns a wall of Beauchamp Tower, where he awaited execution. It was a quiet but fitting tribute to his family, to whom he had been so dedicated.



Actors Jim Sturgess and Natalie Portman as George and Anne in the drama *The Other Boleyn Girl*. In history, the real George has been overshadowed by his sister

“It’s a story of hubris follo



GETTY IMAGES

wed by a fall”



Traders on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange after the closing bell on 29 September 2008. A record 778 points were wiped off the Dow Jones that day, as the 2008 financial crisis pushed the world's banking system to the edge of collapse

Ten years ago this month, the world was rocked by a financial crash that still reverberates today. We asked three economic historians to reflect on the events of 2008 and consider how history will remember the crisis

Complements the BBC Radio 4 series *The Age of Capitalism*



The panel



Martin Daunton

is emeritus professor of economic history at the University of Cambridge and co-editor of *The Political Economy of Public Finance* (Cambridge, 2017)



Scott Newton

is emeritus professor of modern British and international history at the University of Cardiff and author of *The Reinvention of Britain 1960–2016: A Political and Economic History* (Routledge, 2017)



Dr Linda Yueh

is an economist at Oxford University and London Business School and author of *The Great Economists: How Their Ideas Can Help Us Today* (Viking, 2018)

They're among the most enduring images of the 21st century: shell-shocked market traders looking on in horror as trillions are wiped off share prices; people queuing round the block to withdraw savings from Northern Rock; Lehman Brothers employees streaming out of Canary Wharf, boxes of possessions in hand, now effectively jobless. Behind those images lay the greatest jolt to the global financial system in almost a century – a jolt that pushed the world's banking system towards the edge of collapse.

The 2008 financial crash had long roots but it wasn't until September 2008 that its effects became apparent to the world. Within a few weeks, Lehman Brothers, one of the world's biggest financial institutions, went bankrupt; £90bn was wiped off the value of Britain's biggest companies in a single day; and there was even talk of cash machines running empty.

In the short term, an enormous bail-out – governments pumping billions into stricken banks – averted a complete collapse of the financial system. In the long term, the impact of the crash has been enormous: depressed wages, austerity and deep political instability. Ten years on, we're still living with the consequences, as our experts make clear.

What do you see as the main causes of the 2008 crash?

Scott Newton: The immediate trigger was a combination of speculative activity in the financial markets, focusing particularly on property transactions – especially in the USA and western Europe – and the availability of cheap credit. There was borrowing on a huge scale to finance what appeared to be a one-way bet on rising property prices. But the boom was ultimately unsustainable because, from around 2005, the gap between incomes and debt began to widen. This was caused by rising energy prices on global markets, leading to an increase in the rate of global inflation.

This development squeezed borrowers, many of whom struggled to repay mortgages. Property prices now started to fall, leading to a collapse in the values of the assets held by many financial institutions. The banking sectors of the USA and the UK came very close to collapse and had to be rescued by state intervention.

Martin Daunton: The crisis had two major causes – weak regulation of financial interests and institutional flaws. Excessive financial liberalisation from the late 20th century, accompanied by a

“There was a complacent assumption that financial crises were a thing of the past, and that volatility had declined”

MARTIN DAUNTON

reduction in regulation, was underpinned by confidence that markets are efficient. This replaced the scepticism of [influential interwar economist] John Maynard Keynes that economies are intrinsically unstable.

The crash first struck the banking and financial system of the United States, with spill-overs into Europe. Here, another crisis – one of **sovereign debt** – arose from the flawed design of the eurozone; this allowed countries such as Greece to borrow on similar terms to Germany in the confidence that the eurozone would bail out the debtors. When the crisis hit, the European Central Bank refused to reschedule or **mutualise** debt and instead offered a rescue package – on the condition that the stricken nations pursued policies of austerity.

Was the crash a natural continuation of previous global trends, or a decisive break from them?

Linda Yueh: Crises occur fairly regularly throughout history, but this one was unusual in that it threatened the entire system.

MD: I see the crisis as a culmination of previous trends. In many ways, it arose from the overly confident belief that markets are preferential to regulation. Such an assumption was a major feature of the last quarter of the 20th century, both at the **International Monetary Fund** and the US Treasury.

It is difficult to give a precise date for the transformation, but it arose from a combination of a reliance on commercial banks to recycle **petrodollars** after the oil shock of 1973; the confidence of the Thatcher and Reagan governments in markets; a transformation in economics; structural changes in the world economy with the rise of

multinational corporations; and the growth of transnational banks, leading to greater flows of capital around the world.

The speed and savagery of the crash appeared to take the world by surprise. Was it unusual in being so sudden and so unexpected?

SN: The crash caught economists and commentators cold because most of them have been brought up to view the free market order as the only workable economic model available. This conviction was strengthened by the dissolution of the USSR, and China's turn towards capitalism, along with financial innovations that led to the mistaken belief that the system was foolproof.

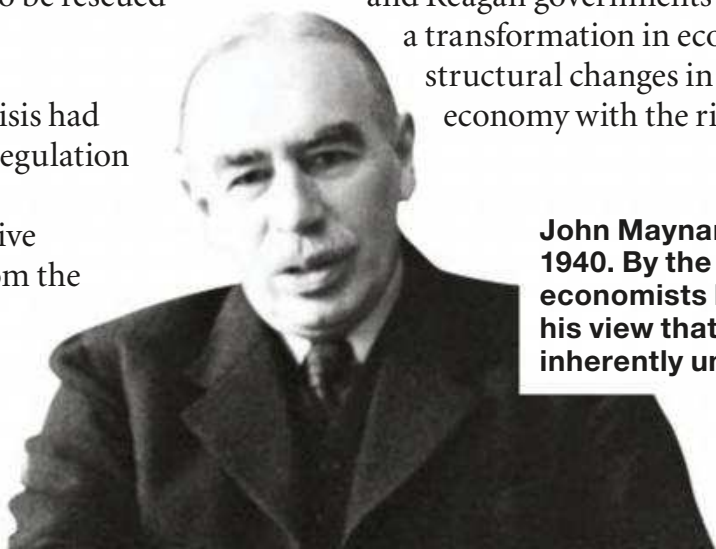
It was more sudden than the two previous crashes of the post-1979 era: the property crash of the late 1980s and the currency crises of the late 1990s. This is largely because of the central role played by the banks of major capitalist states. These lend large volumes of money to each other as well as to governments, businesses and consumers. Given the advent of 24-hour and computerised trading, and the ongoing deregulation of the financial sector, it was inevitable that a major financial crisis in capitalist centres as large as the USA and the UK would be transmitted rapidly across global markets and banking systems. It was also inevitable that it would cause a sudden drying up of monetary flows.

MD: There was a complacent assumption that crises were a thing of the past, and that there was a 'great moderation' – the idea that, over the previous 20 or so years, **macroeconomic** volatility had declined. The variability in inflation and output had declined to half of the level of the 1980s, so that the economic uncertainty of households and firms was reduced and employment was more stable.

In 2004, Ben Bernanke, a governor of the Federal Reserve who served as chairman from 2006 to 2014, was confident that a number of structural changes had increased economies' ability to absorb shocks, and also that macroeconomic policy – above all **monetary policy** – was much better in controlling inflation. In congratulating himself for the Fed's successful managing of monetary policy, Bernanke was not taking account of the instability caused by the financial sector (and nor were most of his fellow economists). However, the risks were apparent to those who considered that an economy is inherently prone to shocks.

How closely did the events of 2008 mirror previous economic crises, such as the Wall Street Crash of 1929?

John Maynard Keynes in 1940. By the 2000s, many economists had rejected his view that markets are inherently unstable





Unemployed men queue at 'Big Al's Kitchen for the Needy' following the Wall Street Crash of 1929. The kitchen, run by the gangster Al Capone, fed about 3,500 people a day

SN: There are some parallels with 1929 – the most salient being the reckless speculation, dependence on credit, and grossly unequal distribution of income. However, the Wall Street Crash moved across the globe more gradually than its counterpart in 2007–08. There were currency and banking crises in Europe, Australia and Latin America but these did not erupt until 1930–31 or even later. The US experienced bank failures in 1930–31 but the major banking crisis there did not occur until late 1932 into 1933.

LY: Every crisis is different but this one shared some similarities with the Great Crash of 1929. Both exemplify the dangers of having too much debt in **asset markets** (stocks in 1929; housing in 2008).

MD: Crises follow a similar pattern – over-confidence succeeded by collapse – but those of 1929 and 2008 were characterised by different fault lines and tensions. The state was much smaller in the 1930s (constraining its ability to intervene) and international capital flows were comparatively tiny.

There were also differences in monetary policy. By abandoning the **gold standard** in 1931 and 1933, Britain and America regained autonomy in monetary policy. However, the Germans and French remained on gold, which hindered their recovery.

The post-First World War settlement hampered international co-operation in 1929: Britain resented its debt to the United States, and Germany resented having to pay war reparations. Meanwhile, primary producers were seriously hit by the fall in the price of food and raw materials, and by Europe's turn to self-sufficiency.

“There are parallels with 1929 – reckless speculation, dependence on credit, and unequal distribution of income”

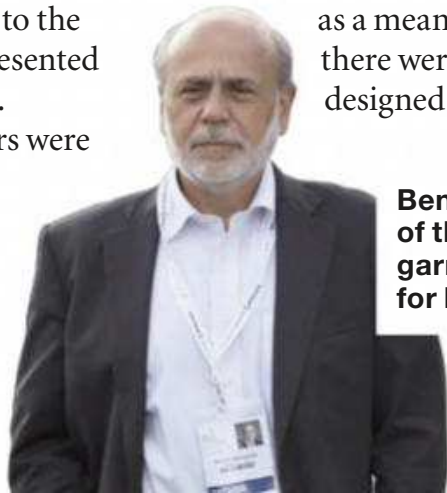
SCOTT NEWTON

How successfully did policy makers apply the lessons of those previous crises to the events of 2008?

LY: My recent *Great Economists* book details how, in 2008, Ben Bernanke and other central bankers drew on the wisdom of economists like Milton Friedman (1912–2006), who stressed the importance of utilising monetary policy in such episodes. Policymakers also applied the insights of economists such as Irving Fisher (1867–1947) to avoid the **debt-deflation** spiral. This spiral was a hallmark of the 1930s and is still plaguing Japan after its early 1990s crash.

SN: Initially, policymakers reacted quite successfully. Following the ideas of Keynes, governments didn't use public spending cuts as a means of reducing debt. Instead, there were modest national **reflations**, designed to sustain economic activity

Ben Bernanke, former chairman of the Federal Reserve, has garnered criticism and praise for his role in the 2008 crash



Financial crisis glossary

Asset markets refer to classes of assets – houses, equities, bonds – each of which is traded with similar regulations and behaviour.

Debt-deflation is the process by which, in a period of falling prices, interest on debt takes an increasing share of declining income and so reduces the amount of money available for consumption.

The **Gold Standard** fixed exchange rates by the amount of gold in their currencies. As a result, it was not possible to vary exchange rates to solve a balance of payments (the difference between payments into and out of a country) deficit, and instead costs were driven down and competitiveness restored by deflationary policies.

The **International Monetary Fund** is an organisation created in 1944 which now concentrates on structural reform of developing economies and resolving crises caused by debt.

Macroeconomics refers to the behaviour and performance of the economy as a whole, by considering general economic factors such as the price level, productivity and interest rates.

Monetary policy uses the supply of money and interest rates to influence economic activity. This is in contrast to fiscal policy which depends on changes in taxation or government spending.

Mutualisation of debt entails moving from a government bond that is the responsibility of a single member of the eurozone to make it the joint responsibility of all members.

Petrodollars are the dollars received by oil producers. Particularly after the increases in prices during the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979, and again after 2003, their earnings – the petrodollars – led to the growth of international financial flows through commercial banks.

Quantitative easing is the process by which a central bank purchases government bonds and other financial assets from private financial institutions. The institutions selling assets now have more money and the cost of borrowing is reduced. Individuals and businesses can borrow more, so boosting spending and increasing employment – though it is also possible that, when this process was employed, money went into buying equities, so boosting the gains of richer people.

Reflation refers to the use of policies that are employed to boost demand and increase the level of economic activity by increasing the money supply or reducing taxes, and so breaking the debt-deflation cycle.

Secular stagnation describes a long period of no or very slow growth in contrast to a short-term cyclical downturn. It assumes that the economy is trapped by a lack of demand and fails to achieve full employment.

Sovereign debt is the debt of national governments, with interest and repayment secured by taxation. If debt was too high, the country might default. This became a risk in 2010, above all in Greece.



Guangzhou's thriving shopping district. A surge in Chinese spending in the post-crash years may have saved the west from a slump, says Scott Newton

and employment, and replenish bank and corporate balance sheets via growth. These packages were supplemented by a major expansion of the IMF's resources, to assist nations in severe deficit and offset pressures on them to cut back which could set off a downward spiral of trade. Together, these steps prevented the onset of a major global slump in output and employment.

By 2010, outside the USA, these measures had been generally suspended in favour of 'austerity', meaning severe economies in public spending. Austerity led to national and international slowdowns, notably in the UK and the eurozone. It did not, however, provoke a slump – largely thanks to massive spending on the part of China, which, for example, consumed 45 per cent more cement between 2011 and 2013 than the US had used in the whole of the 20th century.

How far was the crisis responsible for the political, social and economic uncertainty we are experiencing now?

SN: The crisis was the immediate cause. But the social tensions, economic difficulties and political instability evident across much of the developed world have been long in the making. During this era, governments, supported by cheerleaders in the universities and the media, have prioritised free markets and private profit above the reduction of inequality, the welfare of the community and the pursuit of growth for social purposes.

LY: It has certainly added to the economic uncertainty. Just as in the aftermath of previous serious economic downturns, we are now worrying about a slow growth future.

"The fallout from the crash offers an opportunity to refashion the market economy for the requirements of the 21st century"

LINDA YUEH

The term **secular stagnation**, which was first used in the 1930s, when economist Alvin Hansen warned about a slow growth path after the Great Depression, has been revived by the economist Larry Summers when discussing economic growth today,

But we can harness this uncertainty. A serious episode that breeds doubts about the economic consensus is also an opportunity to refashion the market economy for the requirements of the 21st century.

How do you think historians in 50 years' time will look back on the financial crisis of 2008?

MD: They will see a story of hubris followed by a fall. **Quantitative easing** worked in stopping the crisis becoming as intense as in the Great Depression. The international institutions of the World Trade Organisation also played their part, preventing a trade war.

But historians might then look back and point to grievances that arose from the decision to bail out the financial sector, and the impact of austerity on citizens' quality of life.

What we cannot tell now – but historians in 50 years' time will know – is whether Donald Trump sparks an all-out trade war and destroys multilateral institutions. Or will his brand of nationalist populism be rejected as a problem and not the cure, followed by a turn to more sensible policies aimed at removing both greed and grievance?

SN: To quote [former Chinese premier] Zhou Enlai, "it's too early to say". Much will depend on the unfolding development of China. It seems possible that the crisis is the prelude to the disintegration of the neoliberal order. But, if so, will its replacement be characterised by economic conflict between unstable nations governed by nationalist demagogues? Or, following an interlude of instability, will it spawn a new social and economic golden age, akin to the 30 years of economic prosperity following the end of the Second World War? Currently, the former seems more probable. But history can play tricks on those attempting to predict the future. **II**

Interviews by Rob Attar

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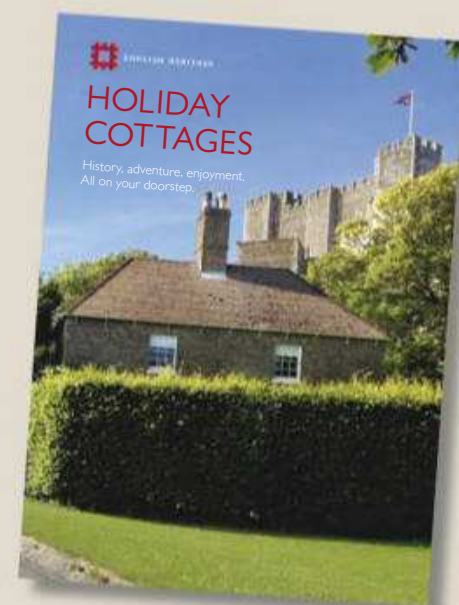


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THE WOMEN WHO CHANGED THE WORLD

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how a cohort of powerful
imperial dynasty

DOMINANT BUT NOT ROMAN PRIEST

chaste, dutiful and submissive.
some of the most dominant – and
Guy de la Bédoyère reveals
women sustained Rome's greatest
in the first century AD

Women of ancient Rome

“What business has a woman with a public meeting?” asked writer Valerius

Maximus in the early first century AD. He answered his own question: “None – if ancestral customs are observed.” Yet this was a time when Roman women were taking more power than ever before – by the back door.

Of all the Roman imperial dynasties, the Julio-Claudian was the first and the longest, lasting from 27 BC to AD 68. It was ruled over by five male emperors, but a little known fact is that the bloodline was passed down the female line. And that female line contained some of the most dominant of all Romans – women without whom the dynasty could scarcely have existed.

The emperors Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero may have wielded absolute power but the intelligence, ambition and ruthlessness of women such as Livia, Octavia and Agrippina the Younger (Augustus’s empress and sister and Nero’s mother respectively) is absolutely integral to the story. And what makes their achievements all the more remarkable is that these women were operating in a society in which the cards were stacked firmly against them.

Male hypocrisy

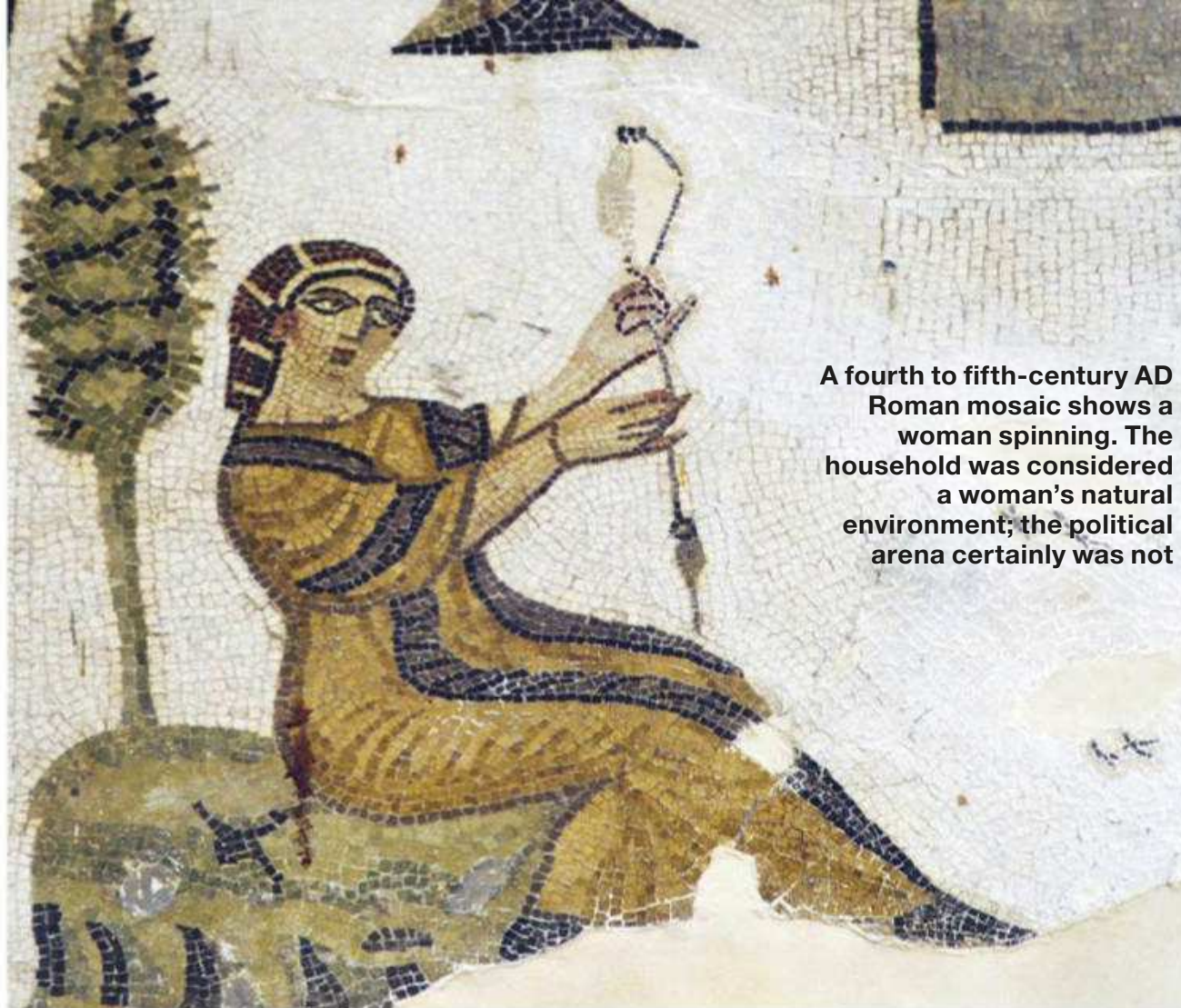
It’s impossible to talk about Roman women without considering the Romans’ almost religious veneration for traditional female virtues. The most venerated of all these virtues was *pudicitia*, the quality of sexual chastity and purity, and the ability to serve as the *materfamilias*.

An honourable woman of unimpeachable virtue enhanced her reputation and that of her husband and children. Caesar said: “My wife ought not even to be under suspicion.”

But there was hypocrisy at play here. And that meant that male infidelity was acceptable and a wife’s reputation was enhanced by her willingness to overlook her husband’s philandering. Aemilia Tertia, wife of the general Scipio Africanus, was admired for ignoring his dalliance with a slave girl – so, in effect, not questioning his self-control.

Conversely, a bad wife could destroy a man and his family by succumbing to the vices of effeminacy and luxury and thereby destabilising the state. The historian Tacitus said: “A good wife has the greater glory in proportion as a bad wife is the more to blame.”

A bad woman was any woman who stepped outside her station in life, like the notorious Sempronia who was witty, educated and charming, as well as adept at using her sexuality. The historian Sallust was disgusted



A fourth to fifth-century AD Roman mosaic shows a woman spinning. The household was considered a woman’s natural environment; the political arena certainly was not

A wife’s reputation was enhanced by her willingness to overlook her husband’s philandering

by the way she lied and pursued men. “There was nothing she held so cheap as her virtue and chastity,” he moralised.

Women were considered by definition untrustworthy because of their susceptibility to ‘luxury’ and inclination to squander money on frivolities. There was a special derogatory word for a talkative woman, a *lingulaca*. An educated woman was treading into dangerous territory – she was intruding into a man’s world, especially if she opened her mouth.

Illicit affairs

Roman attitudes to women are perhaps best captured by the poet Juvenal’s famous line: “Who will guard the guardians?” This is usually regarded as a warning to people in supreme power about their bodyguards or security services. The original context of the quote was, however, very different.

Juvenal was concerned with the intractable ‘problem’ of keeping women under control. His friends said a wife should be locked

indoors. He replied that a woman was likely to use those placed in charge of her to help her pursue illicit affairs.

One woman who became a source of particular horror was Mark Antony’s third wife, Fulvia, who participated in her husband’s political and military career and effectively worked alongside him. By 41 BC, they were regarded as operating as joint consuls, an unthinkable arrangement in a world where women were excluded from political office. She even appeared on coins.

The historian Velleius Paterculus blamed Fulvia for causing *tumultus* (‘disorder’). Plutarch said that Fulvia had no interest in spinning or weaving and was so adept at controlling Antony she had softened him up and made the Egyptian ruler Cleopatra’s job easy (Antony and Cleopatra famously had an affair in the 40s and 30s BC).

Cleopatra VII became the embodiment of the female threat to the Roman masculine world. She titillated and horrified Cicero who said: “I hate the queen.” Horace dismissed her as “mad” and surrounded by “shrivelled eunuchs”. Attacking Cleopatra became a way of criticising Antony long after his fall.

After he defeated Antony and Cleopatra in 31 BC, Augustus – Rome’s first emperor – wanted the women of his new order to be models of Roman female propriety.

Augustus’s sister Octavia (formerly Antony’s fourth wife) and his wife, Livia, became fundamental props of the regime’s image.

Octavia and Livia were associated with divine virtues, commissioned public works, and symbolised Augustus’s moral reforms. Not all the other female members of the dynasty were quite so obliging.

Augustus’s big crisis was how to organise a

Lust, lies and lynchpins

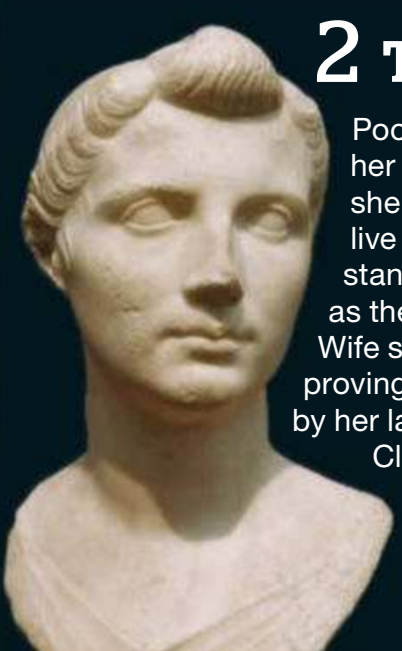
Six women who changed the course of Roman history

1 The prim power broker



Livia (58 BC–AD 29) somehow pulled off the trick of being enormously powerful while posing as the model of Roman female propriety. Augustus's empress once chanced upon some innocent naked men, who were instantly condemned to death as a result. According to historian Cassius Dio, she saved them by primly announcing that “to a chaste woman of restraint naked men are of no more significance than statues”. Tacitus believed Livia was determined to see her son Tiberius succeed Augustus, whatever the price, and blamed her for murdering any rivals.

2 The dynastic tool



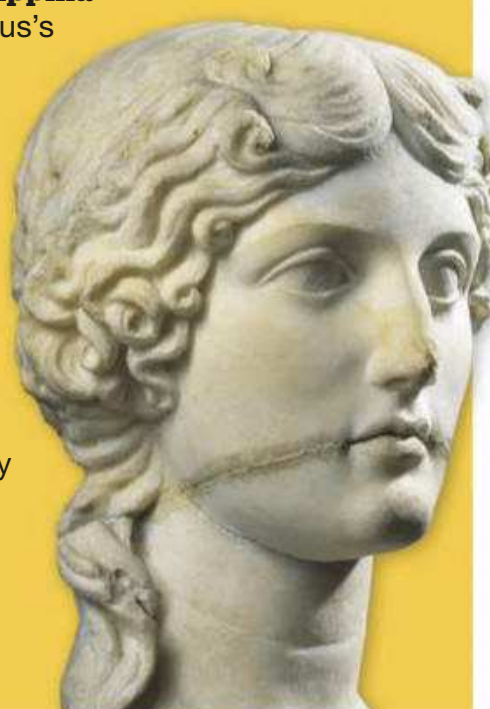
Poor tragic **Octavia** (69–11 BC). Used by her brother Augustus as a dynastic tool, she was expected to produce heirs and live up to the exacting moralising standards of the regime. Octavia behaved as the respectful and compliant Stepford Wife she was supposed to be as well as proving a dynastic lynchpin. Cuckolded by her last husband, Antony, in favour of Cleopatra, she spent much of her life grieving for her dead son Marcellus.

3 The notorious wit



Julia the Elder (39 BC–AD 14), Augustus's only child and dynastic hope, was a nightmare daughter. Despite her successful childbearing, she shamed her father with her partying and infidelities. She was also a notorious wit, famously announcing that she only had affairs “when the ship is full”, ie when she was pregnant. When her father told her off for dressing too showily, she tartly replied that she'd be old one day so she was going to enjoy herself now.

4 The pride of Rome



The empress who never was, **Agrippina the Elder** (c14 BC–AD 33), Augustus's granddaughter, was widely admired. Her fertility (the notorious emperor Caligula was among her offspring), popularity with the army and bravery in the face of Tiberius's brutality towards her and her children made her a heroine. Tacitus called her “pre-eminently noble” and “the glory of her fatherland” but he also said she was “impatient for equality, greedy for mastery” and had thrown off “female flaws in preference to men's concerns”.

5 The reckless bigamist



Thanks to Tacitus, the “ferocious and volatile” **Messalina** (cAD 17–48), Claudius's wife, has gone down in history for her duplicitous and reckless infidelity. After selling honours and Claudius's family heirlooms, Messalina embarked on a bigamous marriage with her lover Silius and planned to topple Claudius. When Claudius's freedmen spilled the beans, Messalina was finished. She was executed in the Gardens of Lucullus, a place she had greedily stolen from its owner.

6 The ruthless opportunist



The “callous and menacing” **Agrippina the Younger** (AD 16–59), Augustus's great-granddaughter, was a hand-picked empress.

Hand-picked by herself, as it turned out. A brilliant and ruthless opportunist, she used her lineage and her son Nero to make herself the most powerful woman in Roman history. Roman historians depicted her as greedy, perverted and degenerate, blaming her husband Claudius and son Nero for their negligence. Medieval chroniclers were impressed. Their depictions of Margaret of Anjou and Elizabeth Woodville owe more than a passing nod to Agrippina.

succession in a system that wasn't supposed to exist. He claimed to have restored the Republic, not to have established a hereditary monarchy, but it was a monarchy in all but name.

Augustus floundered around for a way to identify a successor. His first plan was that his sister Octavia's son Marcellus would follow him, but he died in 23 BC. The Julio-Claudian male heirs sometimes seemed to drop like flies.

Augustus only had one child, a wayward daughter called Julia who did everything she could to shame her father with her self-indulgence and her affairs. Except, that is, for having had two sons called Gaius and Lucius by Augustus's general Agrippa. They became their grandfather's greatest hopes.

Lucius and Gaius's deaths in AD 2 and 4 respectively ended that plan and Augustus resorted to Tiberius, Livia's son by her first husband. The Julio-Claudian succession in AD 14 embarked down its first female transmission. Meanwhile, Julia died in exile, sent there by Augustus, who could not cope with a daughter with a mind of her own.

Incest abounds?

Death continued to stalk the Julio-Claudians like a biblical plague. By AD 37, when Tiberius died, the only realistic option left was Caligula. Descended from Augustus through his mother, Agrippina the Elder (Julia's daughter), and from Octavia and Livia, his birthright was solidly via the female line.

Caligula spent much of his reign being mad, but he rehabilitated Agrippina's memory. She had been brutally tortured and killed in AD 33 by Tiberius who believed she and her family threatened his rule. Caligula also flaunted his relationship with his sisters, one of whom was the notorious Agrippina the Younger. Stories of incest abounded but remained unproven.

When Caligula was assassinated in AD 41 the Praetorian Guard placed his uncle Claudius on the throne. Claudius wasn't descended from Augustus. But crucially, he was descended from both Octavia and Livia. That was what made him the only choice left for the loyalist Guard. Claudius's wife, Messalina, was descended from Octavia too. But Messalina was a disaster. She cuckolded her husband and allegedly engaged in orgies, a competition with a prostitute, and finally an attempted coup. It was too much for Claudius, who had her executed in AD 48.

What came next was almost unbelievable. Claudius married his niece Agrippina the Younger, who brought with her a son, Nero, from an earlier marriage. Nero had a stellar pedigree. Through his mother and deceased father he was descended from Octavia.



A profile of Nero on a c55 AD coin. The emperor's mother, Agrippina the Younger, engineered his rise to power. In return, he had her killed

Agrippina offered her son Nero incestuous sex in a bid to resume control. But it was too late, and he had her murdered

Through his mother he was descended from Augustus via Agrippina the Elder and Julia. He was also descended from Livia.

Agrippina the Younger knew her path to power lay through Nero. But that was the trap for a Roman empress. She persuaded Claudius to displace his own son, Britannicus, and make Nero the heir. In AD 54 she arranged Claudius's death by poisoning. By then she was already posing as a joint ruler, appearing on coins alongside him. She had opponents murdered and also ordered the killing of anyone with a dynastic claim.

When the teenage Nero succeeded Claudius, Agrippina carried on as before, determined to be an empress in her own right. But she hadn't taken account of Nero's mounting resentment at his domineering mother. When Nero took up with the glamorous Poppaea, Agrippina smelled defeat. She offered Nero incestuous sex in an attempt to resume control. It was too late and Nero ordered her murder in AD 59.

Nero went on to marry Poppaea but killed her and her unborn child in AD 65 in a fit of

rage. Apart from some fringe descendants of the Julio-Claudians, the dynasty had been wiped out. But if it had not been for the women there would never have been a dynasty at all. It would not be until AD 180 – over a century later – when a son (Commodus) born during his father's (Marcus Aurelius's) reign would succeed him.

Bucking trends

Excluded from legal power, each of these women worked in different ways to pursue her interests and those of her children. This exclusion did give women some advantages. For example, it was impossible to prosecute a woman for trying to seize power. That meant women could work outside the legal system in ways that a man could not.

These women understood one thing above all: no one was going to give them power. It would have to be taken. Conversely, a Roman woman of status depended largely on working through her husband or her male children.

Despite all the restrictions of Roman society, they bucked the trends, asserting themselves by using the opportunities open to them as women. They changed the history of the Roman world for good or ill, even if many were made to pay a terrible price.

Agrippina the Elder had been famously "impatient for equality", said Tacitus. But she had been thwarted at every stage. Even her ruthless daughter found in the end that the system was loaded against women.

Today, much of the evidence we have is the skewed record of the Roman historians. They preserved in disparaging detail how the Roman world perceived women and their place in society. In their accounts these women found their greatest challenge. That says so much about the world they lived in, and our own where women are still presented with prejudice and obstacles their Roman forbears would recognise only too well.

Nonetheless, nothing can change one fundamental fact. The female line of descent was critical to the existence of the first, greatest and longest lasting dynasty in Roman history. **H**

Guy de la Bédoyère is a historian and broadcaster, specialising in ancient Rome. His books include *The Real Lives of Roman Britain* (Yale, 2015)

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THE ROCK'N'ROLL PRINCESS

Princess Margaret was an almost impossibly glamorous symbol of Britain's postwar journey from austerity to modernity. But then Britain hit the buffers – and so did Margaret's fortunes.

Dominic Sandbrook asks, where did it all go wrong for Queen Elizabeth's younger sister?

Complements the BBC Two series *Princess Margaret: Royal Rebel*



Princess Margaret, in an official royal portrait from 1973 and a holiday snap by her husband in 1969. Her love of parties and high-society life, and her choice of men, generated several negative headlines





During the spring of 1976, senior advisers to Queen Elizabeth II approached the prime minister, Harold Wilson, with a problem. After almost 16 years, her sister Margaret's marriage to the photographer Antony Armstrong-Jones was in trouble. The princess had retreated to the Caribbean island of Mustique recently with her latest lover, Roddy Llewellyn, a would-be gardener almost two decades her junior. The affair was common knowledge on Fleet Street, and the palace wanted to nip speculation in the bud by announcing Margaret and Lord Snowdon were to separate.

Wilson believed he had the ideal solution to curb the media sensation this would cause. He had long been planning his resignation, so suggested that the palace break the news a day or two afterwards as it would be overshadowed by the political fallout. But he was wrong. For when Margaret's separation was announced on 19 March, it made the front page not just of every British newspaper, but in countless papers worldwide.

Margaret was, after all, not just a princess. She had always been a star and darling of the gossip columns – seen as naughty, witty, sexy and difficult in the public imagination. At a time when the monarchy's image seemed unshakeably staid, she stood out. It was said that people dreamed of the Queen dropping in for a cup of tea and cake. Nobody would have said that of her sister. Margaret's tastes ran more to coffee and a cigarette, or, in her later years, a large glass of whisky or gin. She was fun – and that made her dangerous.

Even by the standards of the British royal family in the 20th century, Margaret's life had a soap-opera quality. It was not a comparison she would have enjoyed, since almost everybody who met her commented on her herculean, world-class snobbery. But as the younger daughter of George VI, who was never realistically going to ascend to the throne, she was assigned her role in the drama at a young age and seemed incapable of breaking out. From the beginning, the press depicted her as the stereotypical younger sister: pretty but undisciplined. This was a cliché, of course, but one from which she never escaped.

Becoming the socialite

Born in 1930, Margaret was often described as the sharper of the reluctant monarch's two girls, and the more indulged. Even when she was a teenager, one visitor remarked that she was "full of character and very tart". The diplomat Duff Cooper, who met her when she

If the Queen appeared a breath of fresh air, then Margaret seemed to bring more than a dash of Hollywood-style glamour

was in her late teens, wrote that she was "a most attractive girl – lovely eyes, lovely mouth, very sure of herself and full of humour. She might get into trouble before she's finished."

He was right about that. By the time Elizabeth got married in 1947, Margaret was already becoming the spoiled socialite who would dominate column inches for decades. The society photographer Cecil Beaton found it a challenge to take her picture, complaining that she had "been out at a nightclub until 5.30 the morning before and got a bit tired after two hours' posing". Her former governess Marion Crawford once lamented: "More and more parties, more and more friends, and less and less work."

In some ways, perhaps, this reputation, which defined Margaret well into the 1950s, was not such a bad thing. She was an attractive young woman in her early twenties, so who could blame her for enjoying herself? What was more, Britain at the time seemed a tired, grey, threadbare country, still hide-bound by rationing, still scarred by bomb damage, still run, by and large, by the old men who had won the war.

If the Queen, who succeeded George VI in 1952, appeared a breath of fresh air, leading her country into a New Elizabethan age, then Margaret seemed to bring more than a dash of Hollywood-style glamour. The papers breathlessly recounted how she would dance into the small hours with aristocratic friends. As one of her biographers, Tim Heald, remarks: "Photographs from the time show an almost impossibly glamorous figure. Hats, bouquets, handbags are all apparently permanent fixtures, as is a wide seductive smile."

Too seductive, perhaps? Sexual morality was a source of immense

anxiety in the mid-1950s. The headlines were full of so-called juvenile delinquents and the teenager was becoming a national obsession. As Britain moved from austerity towards affluence, commentators warned of the dangers of homosexuality, prostitution, teenage pregnancies and general moral degradation. It was against this background that, at the coronation in 1953, a few eagle-eyed observers spotted Margaret brushing a bit of fluff affectionately from the uniform of Group Captain Peter Townsend, her late father's equerry.

Not only was Townsend 16 years older than Margaret, he was a divorced father of two. He proposed marriage and she was minded to accept, but when politicians and press alike held up the monarchy as an unimpeachable bulwark of tradition in a changing world, the match was bound to be controversial. Besides, it had not been so long since the abdication crisis of 1936, which some people thought came close to destroying the monarchy altogether. As prime minister, Winston Churchill was said to be dead against the marriage, and the *People* newspaper even claimed that it "would fly in the face of royal and Christian tradition".

A slide into tragedy

Polls showed the public in favour of Margaret following her heart. Yet this was a deferential age, not a populist one, and what the public thought was neither here nor there. After a two-year hiatus, Margaret duly fell into line. "I have decided not to marry Group Captain Peter Townsend," she explained in a statement in October 1955, adding that she was "mindful of the church's teachings that Christian marriage is indissoluble, and conscious of my duty to the Commonwealth".

Her life might have been different if she had married the man she loved. As it was, it slid, slowly but inexorably, into tragedy. Before that, however, came the lurid saga of her relationship with Antony Armstrong-Jones, whom she married in 1960.

At first, it seemed a good match. They were both spirited, attractive, waspish and slightly raffish. They liked parties and a drink. And there seemed to be approval for her new beau. In an age when image-making was increasingly important, with magazines turning photo-journalism into a glamorous pursuit, the

Margaret poses for Cecil Beaton for her 26th birthday in 1956, a year after ending her romance with Peter Townsend





1 A colourised image of the royal family in 1936 outside the miniature cottage built for Princess Elizabeth (standing; Margaret is seated)
2 Margaret attends the premiere of *Captain Horatio Hornblower*, Leicester Square, 1951 **3** At the British Industries Fair in 1953 while her lover, Peter Townsend, looks on **4** With her husband, the “waspy and slightly raffish” Lord Snowdon, at the Villa D’Este near Rome, 1965

The scandals of Princess Margaret



1



2



4



3

- 1 Margaret in 1972 surrounded by friends on the island of Mustique, her retreat from an unhappy marriage and the British press
- 2 News of Margaret's separation from Lord Snowdon filled the front pages, but the divorce was not finalised for two years
- 3 The Queen and her sister in 1999, less than three years before Margaret's death
- 4 Enjoying a cigarette at the TV and Radio Awards, London, 1985

photographer had become a cult hero.

Only a few sceptics sounded the alarm. Armstrong-Jones's friend and publisher Jocelyn Stevens openly told him he was making a terrible mistake. And novelist Kingsley Amis, in angry-young-man mode, thought it was a dreadful symbol of modern Britain "when a royal princess, famed for her devotion to all that is most vapid and mindless, is united with a dog-faced, tight-jeaned fotog of fruitarian tastes such as can be found in dozens in any pseudo-arty drinking cellar in London. They're made for each other."

For a time, though, all went well. Still in her mid-thirties, Margaret, now the Countess of Snowdon, seemed perfectly placed to bask in the glow of Sixties London, the most 'swinging' city in the world. She and her husband, Lord Snowdon, hobnobbed with fashionable actors and writers such as Peter Sellers and Harold Pinter, were seen in all the right nightclubs and struck precisely the right semi-bohemian note to be taken seriously by visiting American feature writers. As *Time* magazine famously put it: "The guards now change at Buckingham Palace to a Lennon and McCartney tune, and Prince Charles is firmly in the long-hair set." And Margaret was a very visible symbol of change.

Damaging the royal family

In many ways, this was a triumph of style over substance. The idea that Prince Charles was in the "long-hair set" now looks laughable, and Margaret's supposed role as a bridge between royal tradition and swinging bohemianism was no less illusory. To her friends, she cut an increasingly spoiled, sulky and unhappy figure, especially as her marriage fell apart under the pressure of affairs from both parties. Rather than witty or spiky, many people now found Margaret downright rude. She was "tiresome, spoilt, idle and irritating", wrote the diarist Sir Roy Strong. "She has no direction, no overriding interest. All she likes is young men."

By the early 1970s, Margaret increasingly sought refuge in her villa on Mustique, the venue for her famously boozy parties. In its way, her chosen bolthole spoke volumes. While the Queen holidayed in the bleak, windswept, thoroughly traditional country estates of Sandringham and Balmoral, the sun-drenched Caribbean island exuded exclusivity, expense and hedonism. That was just as Margaret liked it. But with headlines in Britain full of strikes, bombings and three-day weeks, it made her a natural target.

When news of her separation broke in March 1976, the press turned on her with savage gusto. Thanks to the reform of the



Workers march for greater pay, Hyde Park, c1970. As the UK's postwar boom hit the rocks, Britons grew less sanguine about Princess Margaret's extravagant lifestyle

She was on the gin by mid-morning and told the caterers at an old people's home their coronation chicken looked like sick

divorce laws a few years earlier, more marriages were breaking up than ever before. Yet the royal family was supposed to be different. Indeed, people actively wanted it to be different. Much of the monarchy's popularity during Margaret's lifetime had been based on its image as a happy, united churchgoing family, with the Queen and Prince Philip held up as exemplary parents.

Thanks to Margaret, that image seemed unsustainable. By April 1978, seven out of 10 people agreed that she had damaged the royal family and whenever her most outspoken critic, Labour MP Willie Hamilton, laid into her "expensive, extravagant irrelevance", many listened.

"The Queen and her family reflect as well as represent the community," said *The Times* two years after Margaret's marriage broke down. "They are exposed to the pressures of modern life like the rest of us." Peregrine Worsthorne of *The Telegraph* even suggested that the royal family should be seen as a "normal" family in a permissive age, complete with "royal broken marriages, merry widows, disorderly divorcees, delinquent teenagers". He was joking, but in the long run, he was more perceptive than perhaps he realised.

For Margaret, the rest of her life was a sad story after the giddy glamour of her youth.

Public engagements were often disastrous. Conservative MP Matthew Parris claimed that when she visited his constituency in the 1980s, she was on the gin by mid-morning and insulted the caterers at an old people's home by telling them their coronation chicken looked like sick. As she retreated from the limelight, her place as the nation's leading royal celebrity was usurped by the Firm's latest recruit, Princess Diana. She died in 2002 following a stroke, aged 71.

The obvious question is whether things could have been different. A charitable verdict would be that Margaret was trapped by the conventions of the institution, expectations of the public and sheer bad timing. Born in a much more deferential era, she came of age at a time when the public were thirsting for glamour. She became associated with a supposed golden age of carefree hedonism and was then swept aside during the inevitable hangover. No doubt she was always doomed to struggle in her sister's shadow. History is littered with younger royal siblings who never found a meaningful role.

Yet people are not merely victims of history. Margaret may have found herself, through no fault of her own, cast in the most conspicuous melodrama of all, but she was her own scriptwriter. Nobody forced her to make her own part so dissolute, snobbish, haughty or rude. That was her own decision, and she paid a high price for it in the end. **H**

Dominic Sandbrook is a historian who has written widely on postwar Britain

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OUR FIRST WORLD WAR

Staying alive and thinking to the future

In the penultimate part of his personal testimony series, **Peter Hart** reaches October 1918. Fighting continues, but some British soldiers are being sent home and thoughts turn to the armistice and postwar world. Peter is tracing the experiences of 20 people who lived through the First World War – via interviews, letters and diary entries – as its centenary progresses

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES ALBON



Joe Murray

Joe grew up in a County Durham mining community. He served at Gallipoli with the Hood Battalion of the Royal Naval Division, before being transferred to the western front and fighting at the Somme.

After being wounded at the battle of Arras in April 1917, Murray spent 1918 on light duties attached to the Naval Police at Milford Haven.

“On 5 October, I was told I was demobilised for work in the mines. I arrived home a couple of days later with a civilian suit. Oh dear me, a lousy thing – demobilised! That was the end of that! It was plain that the war would soon be over. My old dad said: “Now look, Joe, you have a week or two off!” I said: “No, these last 6 to 12 months I’ve had a lovely time,

“These last 6 to 12 months I’ve had a lovely time. I haven’t done any work. I’ve enjoyed myself really”

dad. I haven’t done any work. I’ve enjoyed myself really, fed like a turkeycock!”

Murray soon found that life in Burnopfield, County Durham had changed. He had changed.

“I lost a brother aboard HMS *Good Hope* on 1 November 1914, and all my school pals were dead. I felt a stranger in my own village. But I was pleased I had gone through it and survived. I’d changed from a boy to a man. When I left, I was a boy, a proper raw rookie, but with the experiences I’d got more self-confident.



William Collins

Bill worked in a shop and as a gardener before he joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1913 as a stretcher bearer. He served with the First Cavalry Field Ambulance on the western front from 1915 to 1918.

Collins was one of the ‘Old Contemptibles’, a member of the BEF who saw action in the first months of the war. By 1918, he had been promoted to sergeant and was being considered for a position as a commissioned officer.

“Early in October, I was ordered to go back and be interviewed by Surgeon General O’Keefe, who was director of medical services for the Fifth Army. The casualties among



Allied gunners take a rest during the Hundred Days Offensive, near Noyelles, northern France, October 1918. By now, the Germans were, as Sir Douglas Haig put it, “a beaten army”

medical officers had been absolutely horrific. In battle, they were sitting ducks. They were being wounded or killed faster than replacements could be trained so the idea was that experienced non-commissioned officers like myself, who had been doing first aid treatment on the battlefield during the war, would be commissioned with battalions, in order to save qualified doctors for units a bit further back.

The interview was quite short; my record was in front to him and he was examining it. Then he turned and asked me what my father was. I told him he was a builder, and sometimes a builder’s labourer – and that more or less concluded the interview. I might be all right myself, but I don’t think he thought my family was commissioned rank material. I just took it in my stride. I didn’t mind. I could have done the job, but it wasn’t an overweening ambition of mine!



armistice. Haig was pragmatic as he considered the Allied armies victorious in the field, but almost exhausted.

“The situation of the Allied armies is as follows: French army worn out and not been fighting latterly. It has been freely said that “war is over” and “we don’t wish to lose our lives now that peace is in sight”. American army is disorganised, ill equipped and ill trained. Good officers and NCOs are lacking. The British army was never more efficient, but has fought hard and it lacks reinforcements. Morale is bound to suffer. French and American armies are not capable of making a serious offensive now. British alone cannot bring the enemy to his knees.

Haig recommended that a moderate approach be taken.

“Everyone wants to have done with the war, provided we get what we want. I therefore advise that we only ask in the armistice for what we intend to hold, and that we set our faces against the French entering Germany to pay off old scores. In my opinion, the British army would not fight keenly for what is really not its own affair.

Despite the wisdom of not seeking to crush Germany, the provisions of the armistice and 1919 Treaty of Versailles stoked up German resentment in the postwar years. H

Peter Hart is the oral historian at the Imperial War Museum

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William Holbrook

Born in 1892 and brought up in a poor family in Hornchurch, William was recruited underage into the Royal Fusiliers in 1908. He had begun serving with the Fourth Battalion, Royal Fusiliers on the western front in 1914.

Another member of the original BEF, Holbrook had been at the battle of Mons on 23 August 1914. Indeed, he was present when Maurice Dease and Sidney Godley won the first VCs of the war for defending the Nimy bridge over the Mons-Condé Canal.

“Sooner or later, by the law of averages, I should ‘have it’. Eventually, I would get badly wounded, or killed – the

only thing I worried about was getting blinded. I thought it was just a matter of luck. You couldn’t get much sleep, you got tired and weary. Sometimes, I didn’t care one way or another. It seemed to drag on and on. You didn’t take risks so much. It seemed to be going on for ever.

As the troops continued their advance, they were fighting under conditions of open warfare, free from the tyranny of the trenches.

“You had more freedom in open warfare. I preferred it! When you were in the trenches, you were in the same old spot time and time again, backwards and forwards – waiting for the attacks and that sort of business. But in the open, you cover more ground and it’s different altogether. You took what cover you could: hedges, ditches, houses – you ran from one to the other. You threw yourself to the ground a lot and didn’t expose yourself much!



Sir Douglas Haig

Haig was commander of the British Expeditionary Force on the western front.

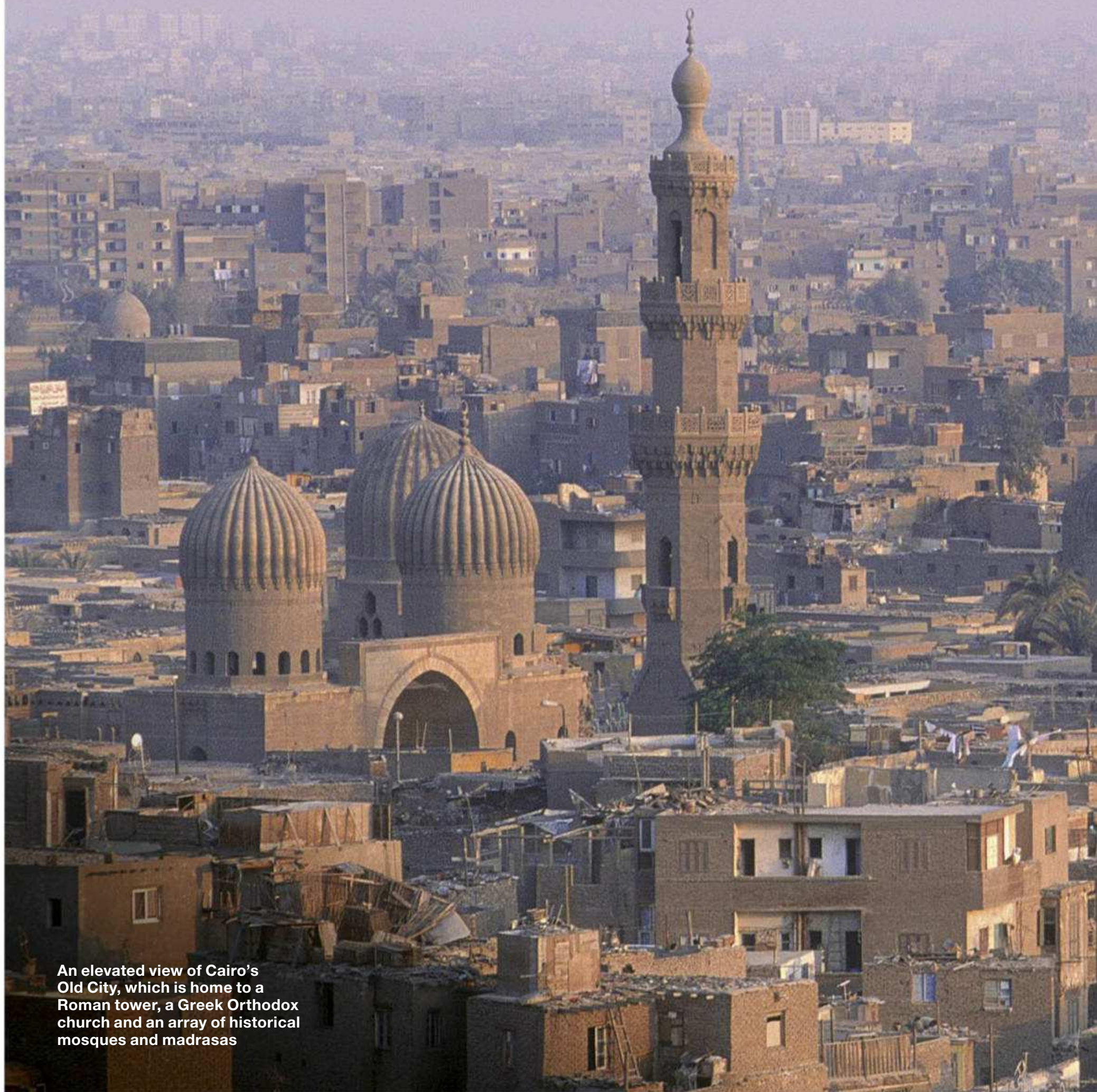
By October 1918, Haig was confident the British Army had the beating of the Germans.

“The enemy has not the means, nor willpower, to launch an attack strong enough to affect even our frontline troops. We have got the enemy down, in fact he is a beaten army and my plan is to go on hitting him as hard as we possibly can, till he begs for mercy.

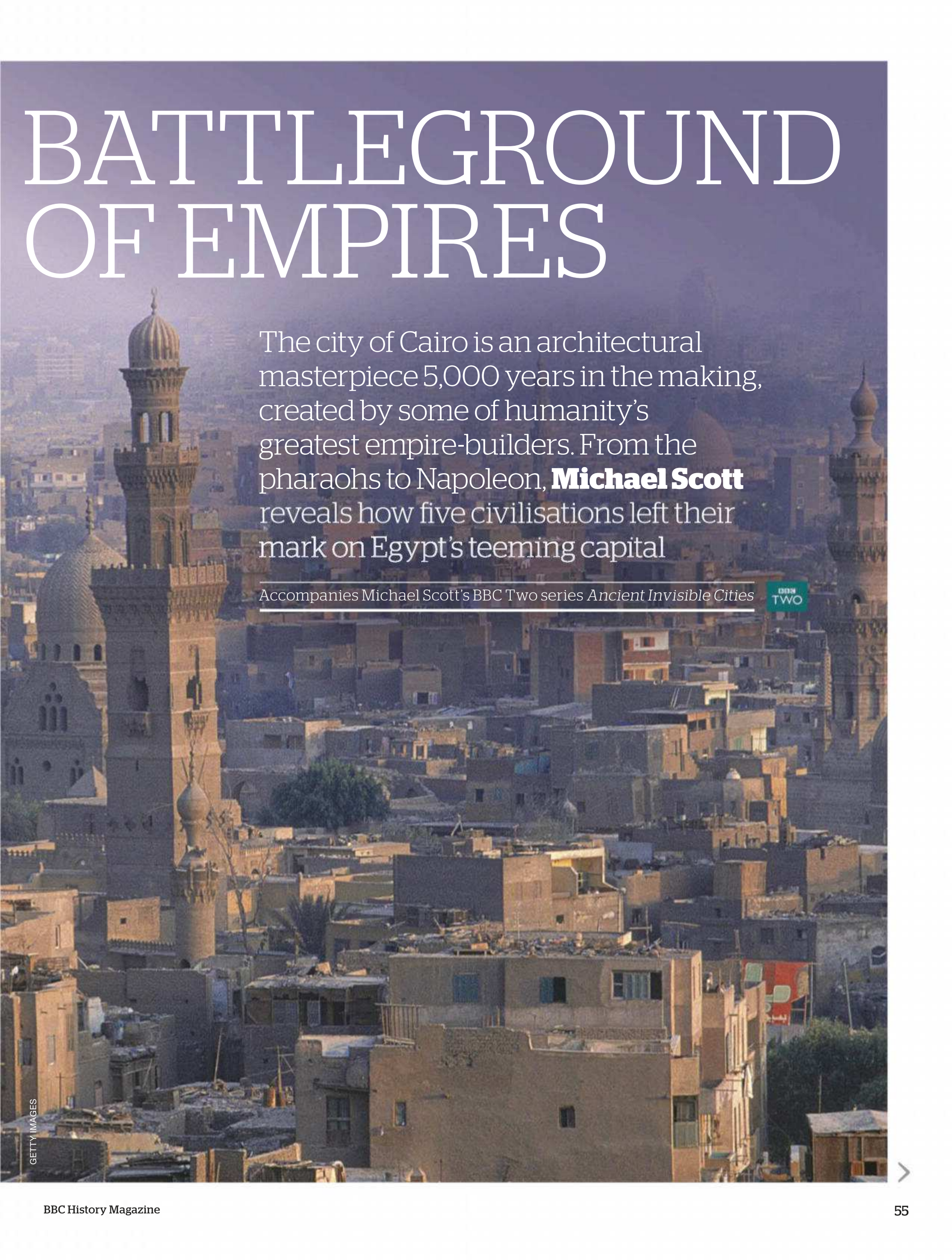
With the war coming to a close, Prime Minister David Lloyd George asked Haig to consider the terms of an

NEXT TIME: “The idea that we should never come under fire again was one of tremendous relief”

CAIRO



An elevated view of Cairo's Old City, which is home to a Roman tower, a Greek Orthodox church and an array of historical mosques and madrasas



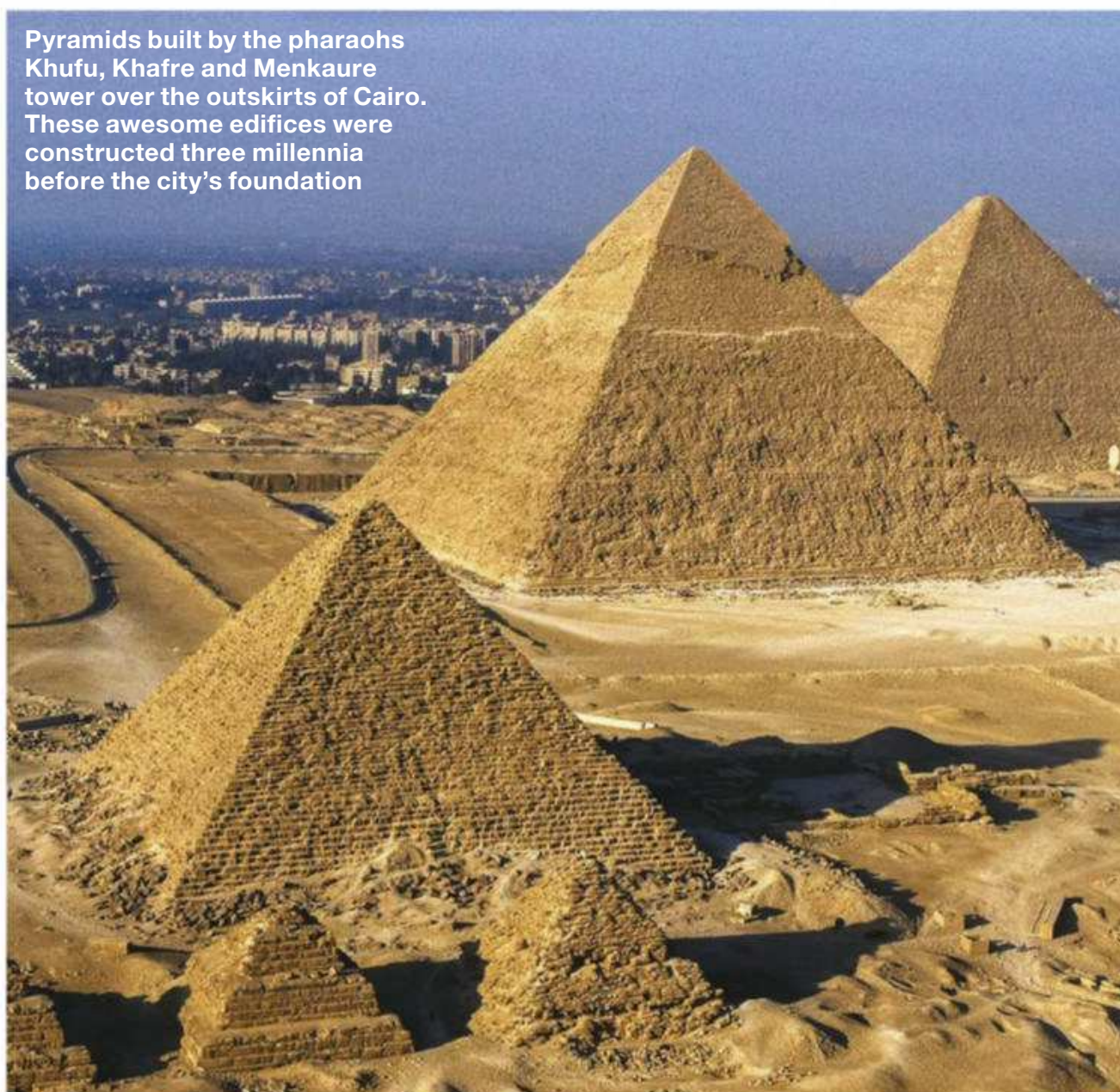
BATTLEGROUND OF EMPIRES

The city of Cairo is an architectural masterpiece 5,000 years in the making, created by some of humanity's greatest empire-builders. From the pharaohs to Napoleon, **Michael Scott** reveals how five civilisations left their mark on Egypt's teeming capital

Accompanies Michael Scott's BBC Two series *Ancient Invisible Cities*

BBC
TWO

Pyramids built by the pharaohs Khufu, Khafre and Menkaure tower over the outskirts of Cairo. These awesome edifices were constructed three millennia before the city's foundation



1 Playground of the pharaohs

Long before Cairo appeared, the Nile delta was a pivot of one of the ancient world's great civilisations

You can't tell a history in Egypt without the ancient Egyptians. Cairo didn't appear for more than three millennia after Pharaoh Khufu commissioned the Great Pyramid at Giza, but that doesn't mean the ancient Egyptians weren't active in the region the city now occupies. The reason for the site's importance is a simple geographical one. Cairo sits at the base of the Nile delta, the point where the mighty river starts to split into many tributaries heading towards the Mediterranean. From the earliest civilisations, this was one of the most strategically desirable pieces of real estate in all of Egypt.

From c3100 BC, when Egypt was united under one ruler, to the end of the so-called Old Kingdom a thousand years later, the ancient Egyptians had their political capital on the outskirts of modern Cairo. It wasn't called Cairo, of course, but Memphis – and, sadly, very little survives from that once splendid city.

Pharaohs were laid to rest in the great burial grounds at Saqqara, also in the outskirts of modern Cairo, within sight of Memphis. The exception to that rule was the fourth dynasty (c2600–2490 BC), whose rulers had their pyramids

constructed on the Giza plateau. The plateau (which, again, was situated on the site of modern Cairo) was a natural plate of limestone, high above sea level. At the time of the fourth dynasty, it actually sat next to the river Nile (the Nile has shifted its course east and west continuously over the millennia).

The western part of the plateau acted as the quarry where the bulk of the stone for the Great Pyramid was cut. During the building of the pyramids, 8,000–10,000 workers lived in this area. They were supplied by goods brought in by boat along the Nile to a harbour area just south of where another of ancient Egypt's architectural masterpieces, the Great Sphinx, now sits.

During the building of the pyramids, 8,000-10,000 workers lived in this area

2 Egypt's mini Babylon

Cairo's Persian rulers proved that the pharaohs weren't alone in having grand designs

The seventh and sixth centuries BC delivered two hammer blows to pharaonic Egypt. First, in 663 BC, the Assyrians seized Memphis and Thebes (modern Luxor). Then, in 525 BC, the Persians destroyed Heliopolis. This was another ancient settlement in the suburbs of modern Cairo, and a major religious centre attached to Memphis.

The age of the pharaohs was now fading. And, as the Persians focused increasing attention on the Mediterranean coast, so was the pre-eminence of the Cairo region – at least as a political and religious centre.

However, the Persians still prized the Nile delta for its strategic and military value. In fact, they began constructing a canal that joined the Red Sea to the Nile at the point where it split into the delta. To do this, they brought in thousands of labourers from all over their empire, and those labourers in turn built themselves a settlement at the spot where the canal joined the Nile. It became known as 'Babylon in Egypt' and can today be found in the region of Coptic Cairo. The Persians built a fort on this site, from where they taxed boats sailing along the river.

The Persians were to dominate Egypt for two centuries – until, in 332 BC, they were ousted by an even more formidable conqueror, Alexander the Great. Soon, Cairo had ceded yet more power to Alexandria, the port renamed in the celebrated Greek commander's honour. But that didn't stop Egypt's Ptolemaic rulers (descended from one of Alexander the Great's generals, Ptolemy) styling themselves as pharaohs and performing rituals at the ancient Egyptian capitals of Thebes and Memphis.



A seventh-century BC Assyrian relief shows soldiers storming an Egyptian city, as the power of Egypt's once mighty pharaohs waned

GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN

3 The bread basket of Rome

The Roman empire dined out on the Nile delta's fertile farmlands

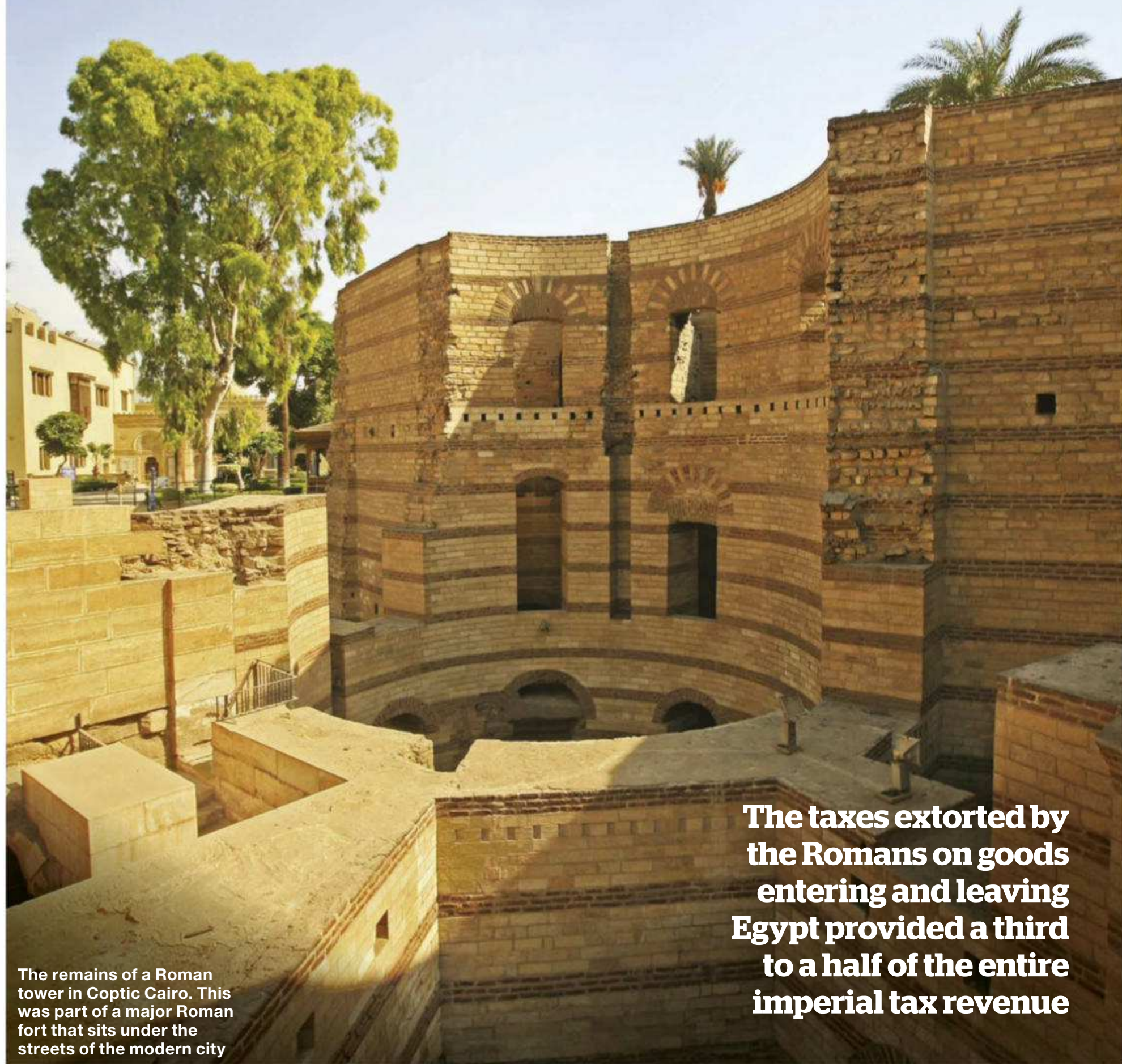
The battle of Actium – fought on the Ionian Sea in 31 BC – was one of the great turning points in Egyptian history. It saw Egypt's last Ptolemaic ruler, Cleopatra, and her Roman lover, Mark Antony, confront a navy commanded by Octavian. Their defeat would have enormous ramifications – Octavian would be made Roman emperor (as Augustus), Cleopatra would take her own life, and Egypt would be gobbled up by the Roman empire.

The Romans soon regarded Egypt as one of their most important provinces – and with good reason. The fertile lands of

the Nile delta provided enough food to keep the population of Rome fed for several months a year. Egypt also offered Roman merchants a gateway to the eastern trade routes. The Romans used the cities on the northern Egyptian coast, the navigable Nile, along with ports on Egypt's Red Sea coast, to set off on trade missions across the Indian Ocean. The taxes extorted by the Roman state on goods entering and leaving Egypt provided, in some estimates, a third to a half of the entire Roman imperial tax revenue.

The Nile was one of this trade route's

vital arteries, and so it was perhaps inevitable that the Cairo region would become a hub of imperial activity. The Romans occupied Babylon in Egypt and based a Roman legion there. At the start of the second century AD, Emperor Trajan recut the canal linking the Nile to the Red Sea and built a stone harbour and a major fort at the meeting point of the canal and the Nile, which was enlarged by later emperors. Today, this sits under the streets of Old Cairo: parts of the structure of the fort were used as foundations for a later Greek Orthodox church.



The remains of a Roman tower in Coptic Cairo. This was part of a major Roman fort that sits under the streets of the modern city

The taxes extorted by the Romans on goods entering and leaving Egypt provided a third to a half of the entire imperial tax revenue

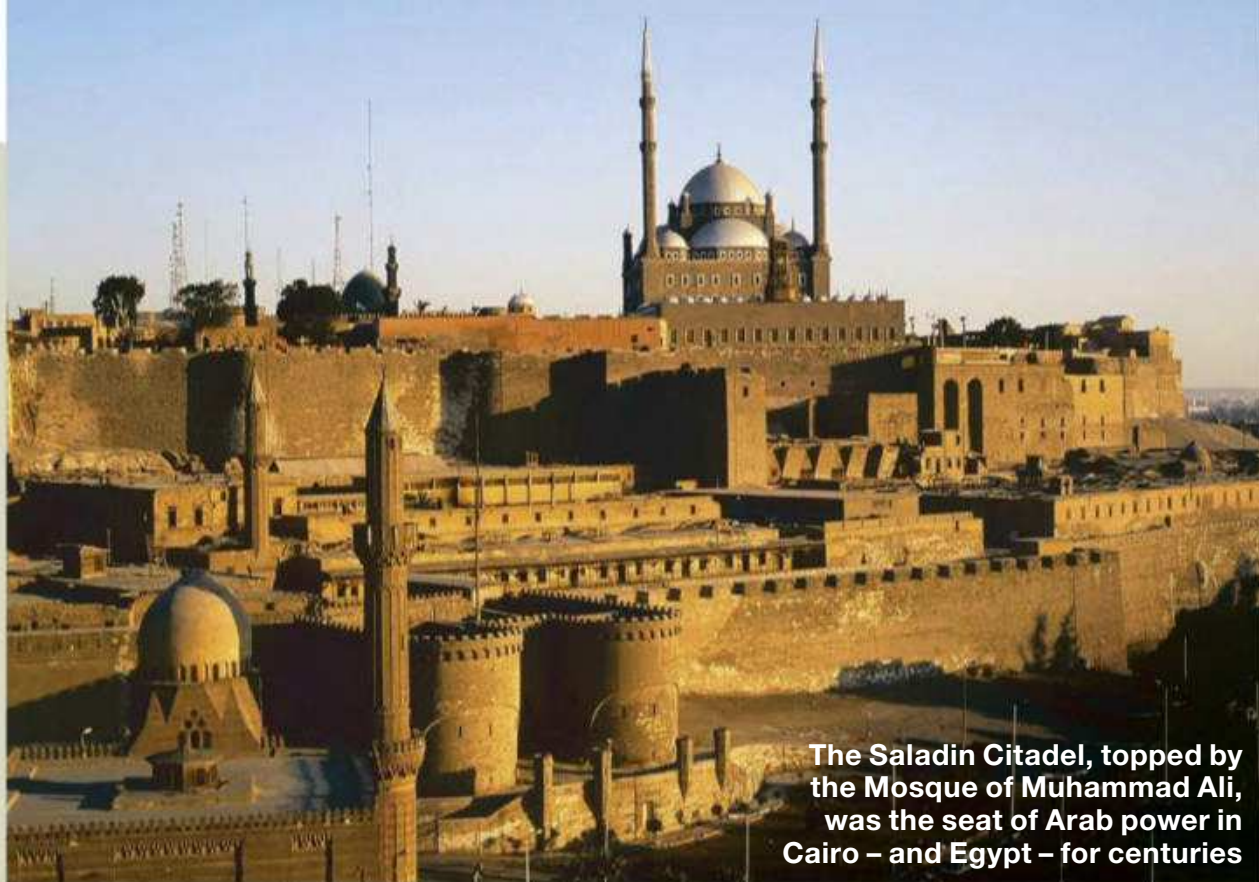
4 An Arab powerhouse

Under its Muslim rulers, Cairo became one of the largest cities in the world

By the seventh century AD, the Cairo region had been playing second fiddle to the city of Alexandria, the Roman provincial capital, for a millennium. But then the pendulum swung decisively.

The catalyst was the collapse of Roman power. In the early 640s, an army under the Arab general 'Amr ibn al-'As swept into Egypt and captured the Roman garrisons at Babylon in Egypt and Heliopolis. Egypt now had a new master. His name was Caliph Umar, and he declared that he wanted no water between his Arabian strongholds and his new Islamic Egyptian capital. Annual flooding of the Nile delta effectively placed a sea between Alexandria and Medina, and so Caliph Umar was forced to look elsewhere. The city he alighted on sat on the site of modern-day Cairo.

That city was called Misr al-Fustat, or 'the city of the tent' – its name inspired by a story in which 'Amr ibn al-'As found a dove nesting in his tent. Believing the dove to have been sent by Mohammad, 'Amr ibn al-'As built the settlement's first mosque on that very site.



The Saladin Citadel, topped by the Mosque of Muhammad Ali, was the seat of Arab power in Cairo – and Egypt – for centuries

As a trading hub, Egypt's capital grew rapidly and became enormously wealthy

Al-Fustat's role as Islamic capital of Egypt was cut short in AD 750, when the last leader of the ruling Umayyad caliphate burned the city to the ground as he fled from a rival Arab group, the Abbasids. In AD 969, the Abbasids were themselves ousted – by the Fatimids, who established a new seat of power at the base of the Nile delta. The city was named al-Qahira.

Al-Qahira became the stronghold of the great Muslim warrior Saladin during the era of the crusades. It was Saladin who constructed a citadel stronghold, which would become the seat of the Muslim rulers of Egypt over the following centuries (the Fatimids gave way to the Ayyubids, the Ayyubids to the Mamluks and the Mamluks to the Ottomans).

Al-Qahira's reputation as a trading city now grew, not only making it wealthy, but also resulting in its rapid expansion. By the 14th century, al-Qahira was one of the world's largest cities. And it was Italian merchants, trading in Egypt, who turned the name of the city, al-Qahira, into the one we recognise in the western world today: Cairo.

5 The scramble for Suez

European colonialists jostled for control of the gateway to the eastern hemisphere

In 1798, one of the world's great cities fell to one of its most formidable military leaders. Napoleon's conquest of Egypt – including, of course, its capital, Cairo – triggered an explosion of Egyptomania in western Europe. This was further fuelled by the discovery – near Alexandria in 1799 – of the Rosetta Stone, providing the key to deciphering ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Napoleon was quickly ousted by the Ottomans (with British support), but French interest in Egypt wouldn't end there. The Congress of Vienna of 1815 gave a number of European powers the green light to focus their energies on the north African nation. On the one hand, that interest

was archaeological; on the other, it aimed at vastly increasing trade and exploiting Egypt's position between the Mediterranean and Red Sea. It was this latter ambition that informed the construction of the Suez Canal, which opened in 1869. Nineteenth-century Cairo itself saw huge investment in buildings and infrastructure.

The British now became the dominant force in Egypt, formally occupying the nation in 1882. While the protectorate ended in 1922, British troops stayed on in the Suez area beyond the Second World War. It was only with the Egyptian revolution of 1952, and the declaration of an Egyptian republic in 1953, that the country truly gained

its independence – with Cairo as its capital.

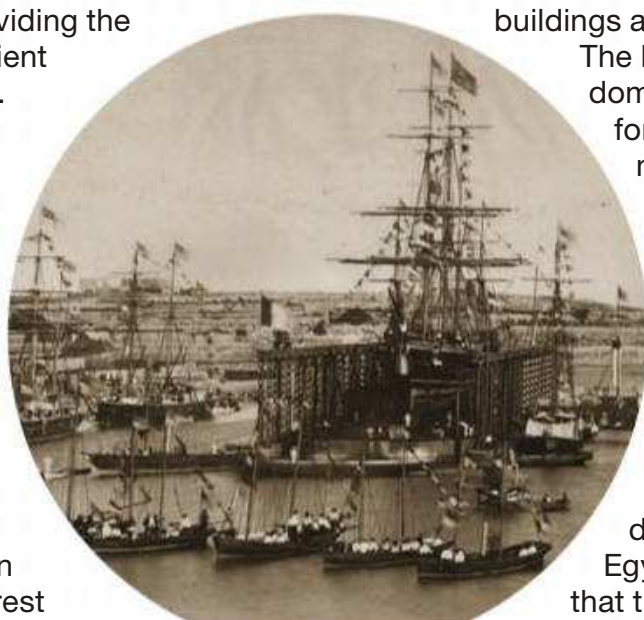
Cairo has a complex history. When you look out over its skyline today, you can see elements of nearly all these cultures – ancient Egyptian, Assyrian, Persian, Roman, Arab, French, British – rubbing shoulders. But that's what makes it such an intoxicating, if overwhelming, city. As a father says to his son in *The Thousand and One Nights*: "He who has not seen Cairo has not seen the world." ■

Michael Scott is professor of classics and ancient history at the University of Warwick. @profmcscott / michaelscottweb.com

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► Michael Scott has written and presented the series **Ancient Invisible Cities: Cairo, Istanbul and Athens**, airing on BBC Two from Friday 7 September



The Suez Canal is officially opened at Port Said, 1869, linking the Mediterranean with the Red Sea

THE **HISTORY** ESSAY



Protestors on the streets of Prague during the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia, 1968. Of all the history books Ian Kershaw has authored down the decades, his two wide-ranging volumes on modern Europe have proved the most difficult to write

THE TRIALS OF WRITING MODERN HISTORY

Fallible memories and a surplus of sources mean that the most challenging era for historians to tackle is the one in which we now live

By Ian Kershaw

When I embarked on my most recent book, *Roller-Coaster, Europe, 1950–2017*, I remarked to a friend that I had a particularly daunting task ahead of me. He, however, was dismissive. “It will be easy”, he said. “You will remember a lot of it.” At first sight, my friend seemed

to have a point. After all, the decades since the Second World War largely coincide with my own lifetime. I was born in 1943, so I lived through all of what I am surveying and analysing in the book. How difficult could that be? Very difficult, as it turns out: *Roller-Coaster* has proved to be the most challenging book I’ve ever attempted.

For one thing, memory is both fickle and fallible. My own memories, like those of any individual, are confined to my own experiences. They can tell me little or nothing about circumstances beyond those experiences, even in my own country let alone in other parts of Europe. Historical assessment cannot rely upon anecdotal evidence. I have added a handful of footnotes in which I do mention my personal recollection of specific events that left a mark on me. One of these refers to my fear during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, another couple to my reactions to the fall of the Berlin Wall, which I witnessed at close quarters while living in West Berlin at the time. But I have kept these out of the main text. In any case, what was clear to me from the start was not only what I didn’t remember, but what I didn’t know. And that was a great deal. Even a keen interest in world affairs did not mean that I was acquainted with more than a fraction of what was needed to understand and write about developments across Europe.

A career that began for me with a book on monastic economy based upon a single monastery in northern England, Bolton Priory, in the 13th and 14th centuries is drawing towards a close with a history of Europe in our own times. The sharp contrast in the fields of enquiry tempts me to reflect a little on the different ways I have had to operate as medievalist and historian of modern Europe, primarily of Germany in the Nazi era and more recently as the author of two wide-ranging histories of the entire continent (*To Hell and Back, Europe, 1914–49* and *Roller-Coaster*).

I was a passionate medievalist. Even now my favourite history books are on the Middle Ages. As a young university teacher, I was fully engaged in the academic debates that are the lifeblood of history seminars. An article I wrote on the Great Famine of 1315–17 in England contributed to an intense debate about whether agrarian crisis at the time halted two centuries of rising population already a generation before the Black Death. I sometimes had the feeling that the further back the period of historical enquiry and

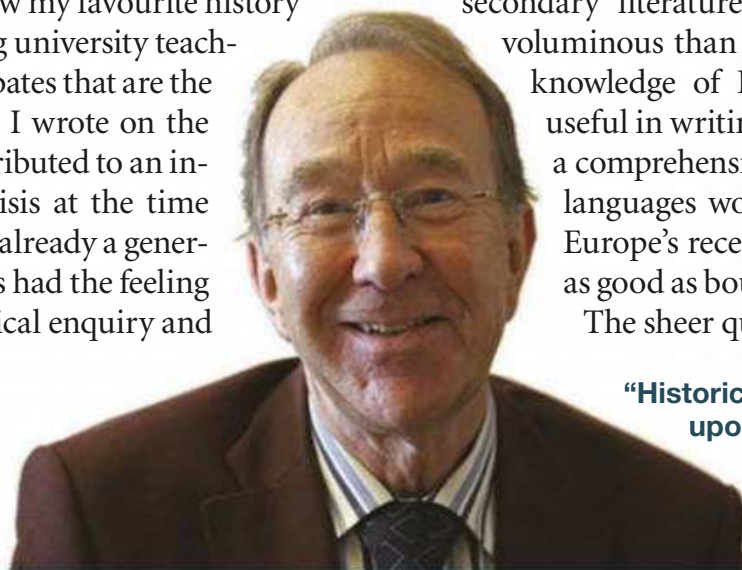
the fewer the surviving remnants of the past were on which to reconstruct it, the more ferocious were the debates among historians.

Historians of Anglo-Saxon England seemed a particularly pugnacious breed. Whether England was a country of sturdy free peasants, or a servile society under a thin crust of aristocratic leadership could produce heated debate – some of it based upon the interpretation of something called ‘Folkland’, to which, as I recall, there are only three references in the whole corpus of Anglo-Saxon charters. Outside specialist circles, such controversies do little to set the pulses racing or affect how we view our own society. My current work, on the other hand, is underpinned by the hope that my exploration of very recent history might help a better understanding of the society we live in.

What differences in approach and execution have I encountered in trying to write about history in such contrasting fields? History, we are sometimes reminded, is a ‘seamless web’. It is indeed the case that something serious historians of all eras have in common is that they pursue objectivity and never wilfully distort the available sources for reconstructing and understanding the past. Yet the techniques they use in exploring disparate avenues of history are necessarily varied, and historians of different eras face differing challenges.

My training as a medievalist instilled in me the need to pay detailed attention to primary sources and deploy close analysis and criticism of those sources. I had the sense in my early writing that I was fairly well abreast not only of the secondary literature, but also of the primary sources (printed and archival) that informed my work. Of course, if I had been writing a history of medieval Europe rather than a localised study, I would have felt less confident about my prospects of mastering the secondary literature and source materials, which are more voluminous than might be imagined. Even then, however, a knowledge of Latin would probably have proven more useful in writing a history of medieval Europe than all but a comprehensive knowledge of modern European foreign languages would be in trying to construct a history of Europe’s recent past. The sources for this latter topic are as good as boundless.

The sheer quantity of material to be taken into account



“Historical assessment cannot rely upon anecdotal evidence,” asserts Ian Kershaw as he writes about history from his own lifetime

PA IMAGES

A mere second's thought is enough to highlight that the information overload on more or less any aspect of modern European history is immense. No individual can master such an array of material

by a historian of modern times was, of course, apparent to me when I changed fields from medieval history to work on Nazi Germany. I often felt then that keeping on top of the constant flood of new publications, as well as trying to cope with the libraries of books on almost every aspect of the history of the Third Reich, was a hopeless task. But I came to know the field fairly well, was able to assess what of the massive literature was important and relevant for my purposes, and, immense though the archival sources are, could find my way around them both in German and other repositories reasonably effectively. On some key issues – the precise role of Hitler at a number of crucial junctures and decision-making on the Holocaust, to mention just two of them – the primary sources available were, in fact, neither plentiful nor easy to interpret.

In attempting to write my two books on modern Europe, more than ever in the second volume, the question of available materials and how to deal with them poses itself in a different form even from when I worked on Nazi Germany, let alone medieval England. A mere second's thought is enough to highlight that the information overload on more or less any aspect of modern European history is immense: a vast outpouring of official records, government and party propaganda, private papers, business accounts, newspapers and other media products, a plethora of sometimes conflicting statistical data, film, radio and television and much else besides, including the seemingly limitless sources of information on the internet. No individual can master such an array of material. Nor, in all probability, could a team of historians, and teams don't lend themselves to producing a single coherent history.

To Hell and Back and *Roller-Coaster* can make no pretence at all of trying to encompass the vast reservoir of source material available. Even if I had far wider linguistic skills at my disposal, I would be unable to work through all relevant material for a single country let alone for all countries in Europe. And it would be a pointless exercise anyway. Experts have written on the history of every European country and dealt with, say, economic history or cultural developments. More general works draw on a rich corpus of research on an extraordinary range of topics, undertaken by countless scholars who have made important contributions in doctoral theses, journal articles and monographs. A history of Europe has, therefore, a vast array of scholarship on which it can and must draw.

So I had to begin by finding what to read. Orientation was not always easy, especially in areas where I had little or no background knowledge. Sometimes, I could call on help from colleagues who were experts in a particular field to determine the most reliable and important works. Trawling through bibliographies and footnotes also helped. I decided at the outset to give *Roller-Coaster*, like *To Hell and Back*, a chronological structure in which chapters would cover relatively brief periods and be subdivided thematically. Extensive reading on each limited period allowed me to deduce what I saw as



Ian Kershaw lived near the Berlin Wall in 1989 but that didn't necessarily make analysing its fall (pictured here) any easier

the salient patterns of transnational development and to shape the chapters around those key patterns.

Writing the history of the very recent past is hugely challenging, but intensely exciting. Some might think that a book that ends in autumn 2017 scarcely constitutes history at all. It is indeed the case that in the final chapter, on the crisis years since 2008, I effectively ran out of history works to consult. I had to turn to specialist works on economics and political science, as well as sifting through the daily products of some first-class journalism.

It used to be thought that history could only be written once a substantial period of time had elapsed since the events under consideration or when the 'sources' (usually meaning government records) became available, often after 30 years or even longer. When I was an undergraduate in the early 1960s, our history curriculum stopped at the First World War. For a long time when I was teaching history, the Second World War seemed to mark a definitive end-point. But it is worth remembering that the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich began systematic research on the Third Reich only six years after Hitler's suicide. In any case, modern media have helped to make obsolete the notion that historical writing has to wait to coincide with the opening of the archives.

What is obvious, of course, is that the passage of time will permit, even necessitate, a reappraisal of writing on the very recent past. But, then, reappraisal of historical work, of whatever period, goes on constantly. This is in the nature of historical research. Writing on the immediate past nevertheless means sticking your head well above the parapet. At least some parts of the story will be familiar to readers who will have their own strong views and interpretations.

My own interpretation unfolds over the course of the book's 12 chapters. *To Hell and Back* ended with Europe starting to rebound from three decades of near self-destruction. The obliteration of German great-power ambitions, the geopolitical reordering of central



Economic, political and communications revolutions transformed Europe in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. TOP: Families of British miners on a picket line outside a Staffordshire power station during the miners' strike of 1972 MIDDLE: Nine world leaders sign the agreement that ended the Bosnian War, December 1995 BOTTOM: A man surfs the web in a Parisian internet cafe, 1995

GETTY IMAGES

The speed of changes, the upheavals, the ups and downs, and swift turns in events all fit the notion that the history of the era from 1950 to 2017 was no less than a ‘roller-coaster ride’

and eastern Europe, the subordination of national interests to those of the two superpowers, unprecedented economic growth, and the mutual deterrent threat of nuclear weapons served to create what I have dubbed a ‘matrix of rebirth’. The first chapters of *Roller-Coaster* deal with Europe shaped by this matrix: the Cold War, the rebuilding of western and eastern Europe, ‘economic miracles’, and cultural trends following the war. The bomb meant an underlying insecurity, but the early postwar decades also brought political reconstruction (of drastically different kinds in western and eastern Europe), extraordinary economic growth that fed both welfare systems and an emerging consumer society, and new forms of cultural experimentation. This part of the book closes with the ferment in the late 1960s that led to student protests in many parts of western Europe, the Prague Spring, and challenges to existing social and moral values.

The elements of the ‘matrix of rebirth’ were already much weaker by the time a fundamental change took place in the 1970s and 1980s. This period ushered in the beginnings of what would congeal over the next two decades or so into what I call a ‘matrix of new insecurity’. Central elements were deregulated economies, the rapid expansion of globalisation, a dramatic revolution in information technology and communications, and, after 1990, the growth of multipolar bases of power to replace the earlier bifurcation between the USA and the Soviet Union.

The role of individuals has to be fitted into these crucial but impersonal developments. One example is the indispensable *personal* role that Mikhail Gorbachev played in the collapse of the Soviet Union and its east European empire between 1985 and 1991. Of course, there were massive structural problems within the Soviet system, but, as almost all experts agree, without Gorbachev it could have staggered on for quite some time. Other prominent figures – Konrad Adenauer, Charles de Gaulle, Margaret Thatcher and Helmut Kohl among them – played vital roles, often against the grain, and cannot be reduced simply to agents or reflections of impersonal change.

Nevertheless, the colossal changes in Europe since the Second World War transcend the part played by individuals. Overall, it is possible to see the second half of the 20th century and first decades of the 21st as shaped by a three-fold revolution: economic transformation beginning in the 1970s; political transformation following the collapse of the Soviet bloc between 1989 and 1991; and a communications transformation instigated by the spread of the internet in the 1990s. The speed of changes, the upheavals, the ups and downs, and swift turns in events all fit the notion that the history of the era from 1950 to 2017 was no less than a ‘roller-coaster ride’.

At the end, as we reach the present day, the balance-sheet is chequered. There have been immensely positive developments in many



Mikhail Gorbachev in Lithuania, 1990. Without his charisma and drive, the Soviet Union may have staggered on way beyond 1991

fields, as the book tries to make clear. Material possessions and health prospects, also mentalities and values, have altered drastically and generally for the better in comparison with the early postwar years. But many earlier certainties and norms have dissolved. De-industrialisation has destroyed or damaged communities, and as the gap in income and wealth has widened many are left with precarious jobs and no real stake in their society. The changes have caused much disorientation and dislocation.

The last decades have led inexorably to a new era of insecurity. Felt in different ways in so many avenues of life, this insecurity has fostered a widespread desire to find security in the familiar – in a sense of national or ethnic identity voiced not least by populist movements that now threaten to break up the very basis of the liberal democracy (and the liberties that it guarantees) that has been Europe’s cherished political system during the postwar decades. The achievements have been enormous, but the structures and values created since the Second World War are under threat as never before. **H**

Professor Sir Ian Kershaw is regarded as one of the world’s leading biographers of Adolf Hitler. He will discuss the fall of the Berlin Wall at *BBC History Magazine’s* History Weekend at York – see historyweekend.com

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BOOK

► **Roller-Coaster, Europe, 1950-2017** by Ian Kershaw (Allen Lane, 2018)

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STUDY HISTORY

Expert advice, practical tips and inspiration for students hoping to plan a future based on the past



You're considering a degree in history, but how do you choose the right course, at the right university?

Over these 14 pages we offer a series of articles designed to help you get the most out of your studies, and find out what a degree in history can do for you.

You will find information and advice on how to choose the right course, as well as details on some of the skills and qualities that history graduates

can bring to the workplace.

We've also spoken to a selection of current and former students to discover what they learned from studying abroad, as well as the benefits of taking a history degree in the UK.

We hope you'll find this a useful guide to help you plan a fulfilling and fascinating future in history.

Charlotte Hodgman
Deputy editor

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Find out how a history degree can aid your career path



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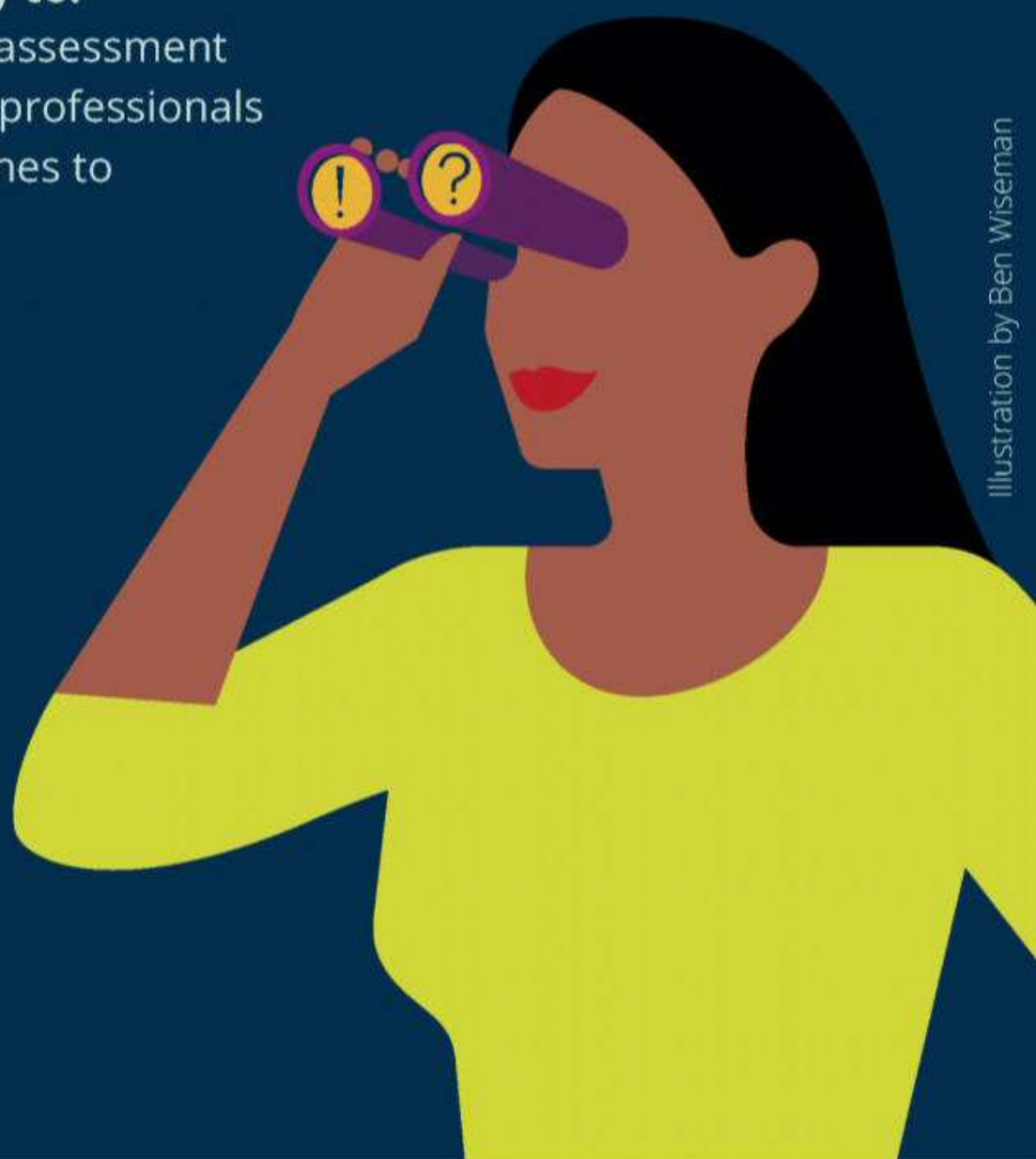


Illustration by Ben Wiseman

10 tips to choosing a history degree

Selecting the right university course is always a tough decision. Here, **Meleisa Ono-George** (right), director of student experience at the University of Warwick, offers her advice on what you should look out for



1 Check the modules

Whether entering an undergraduate or postgraduate programme, you need to consider the specialism of the department. Have a look at the modules on offer to determine what they teach and general expertise. For undergraduates, it's good to look for a department that offers a wide range of global modules. Though you may have loved a certain subject during your A-levels, having a broad range of modules on offer will allow you to explore areas of history you may not have considered, before specialising in your final year and potentially into postgraduate studies.

Consider whether the subject material is current. Are those teaching also actively involved in research? If teaching staff do not specialise in the areas they teach, you may find the material taught to be outdated.

2 Know the course

Another consideration is the structure of the course. No matter how wide-ranging or exciting the modules on offer may be, if the course structure is restrictive and does not allow much flexibility, then it does not matter what is on offer. Make sure you know what core modules are required and how many optional modules you can choose. Can you take modules from outside the department? This is particularly important if you want to include languages, or other subjects, to create a more bespoke degree, tailored to your interests and specialisms.

3 Look for extra opportunities

University is not just about what you learn in the classroom, but also the additional skills and experiences you gain. Look for a history department that provides extra-curricular opportunities that contribute to your personal development, but also provide an experience that will set your degree apart from others. For example, does the programme give students the chance to study abroad? Many universities are part of Erasmus, a student exchange programme that currently offers foreign exchange opportunities across the EU. Some departments have options further afield, in places like Argentina, Japan and Australia.

It is worthwhile researching the full range of opportunities available at a university



4 Know your budget

Alongside any tuition fees, you will need to consider other costs involved in pursuing your degree. Cost of living will vary depending on the location of the campus. Before making your choice, have a look at the price of accommodation. Does the university offer on-campus or off-campus living? Will you need to commute to and from campus? What about the cost of food? Some modules can have very expensive textbooks that students are required to purchase, while some departments will cover the cost of all required readings. The same goes for field trips required as part of the course. Make sure you check what the additional costs may be and what policies the department or university has around such expenses.

5 Consider student feedback

The best history departments are those that listen and take seriously the feedback provided by their students. It is a good idea, then, to ask how student voices are represented in decision-making committees in the department. How have the department and university responded to student feedback? And what opportunities are there for you to raise issues about the course or modules? Are there student course representatives? And what role does the Student Union play in the department? Student satisfaction surveys may give you some idea of the student experience in this respect.

6 Explore the area

You'll need to factor in the location of your chosen university. Is it close to family and friends? If you are not used to living far from home, this may be important, as first year students often suffer from homesickness. But even if you are independent, it is nice to be able to go home some weekends.

You should also consider whether you would prefer a campus-based university or would prefer to live in a city. Cities may sound exciting, but are you the type who is easily distracted? If so, it may be better to be on a campus set away from the city, or one in a small town. The location of a campus may also have implications on diversity, access to culturally specific foods, religious spaces and so on.

7 Assess your needs

As fulfilling and as satisfying finishing an undergraduate or postgraduate degree can be, it can also be an incredibly stressful experience. The most successful students are those who carefully consider their personal and health needs, and prepare properly. With this in mind, it is important to consider the kind of wellbeing and personal support available to students in the history department and the university as a whole. Does the department provide each student with a personal tutor – a member of staff they meet with a couple of times a term throughout their degree? What kinds of medical and mental health services are available? What are wait times like? Can accommodations be made if you become ill or need to take time away from your studies? While many spend lots of time considering their academic needs, it is also important to consider student wellbeing, too.



Student support is key to making your time at university as positive as possible

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8 Know the department's place

While a good history department is dependent on its course and modules on offer, the place of the department in the university is also something to consider, particularly when it comes to the allocation of resources.

Consider the facilities and resources available in the history department and compare this to other departments such as business or engineering. Is there financial investment in the history department and faculty? This is not just about having the most current technologies or new buildings, but also staffing, as well as the number of awards the department can offer. This latter point is important for students considering postgraduate studies.

Having an award on your CV can be important when seeking postgraduate funding, but if the department does not have the resources to provide such awards to undergraduates, it may make your application less competitive.

Allocation of resources is something to consider when choosing a university, says Meleisa Ono-George, particularly the number of academic and support staff available

9 Examine staffing

When considering the resources available to a history department, it is important to find out the number of permanently employed staff, as well as the teacher to student ratio. Fewer staff means less time spent with students.

At university open days, students often ask about the number of contact or teaching hours. The real question should be the availability of tutors outside of lectures and seminars. Are tutors available to meet with students during set office hours throughout the week? Office hours can be invaluable as they provide time for one-on-one conversations with tutors to discuss points of interest or a topic that arose in class.

Many universities employ world-class researchers and historians who do amazingly on the Research Excellence Framework. However, this means nothing if they are not around and available to you.

10 Investigate the student experience

My last tip for students considering a history degree is to find out the reputation and culture of a history department and its university. If you go to a university that is traditional and conservative, do not expect a liberal course offering, and vice versa. Also, consider the university and department values in regard to students.

You may also want to consider the educational, class and cultural backgrounds of the student and staff communities. For instance, some departments tend to attract students from private as opposed to state schools, or from certain parts of the country. Going to a university where your peers are from very different socio-economic or cultural backgrounds should not be a deterrent as this may be a great learning experience;



The reputation and culture of a university or department have an impact on student experience

however, you should consider whether you will feel comfortable within the culture of the history department and university as it will have an impact on your overall experience.

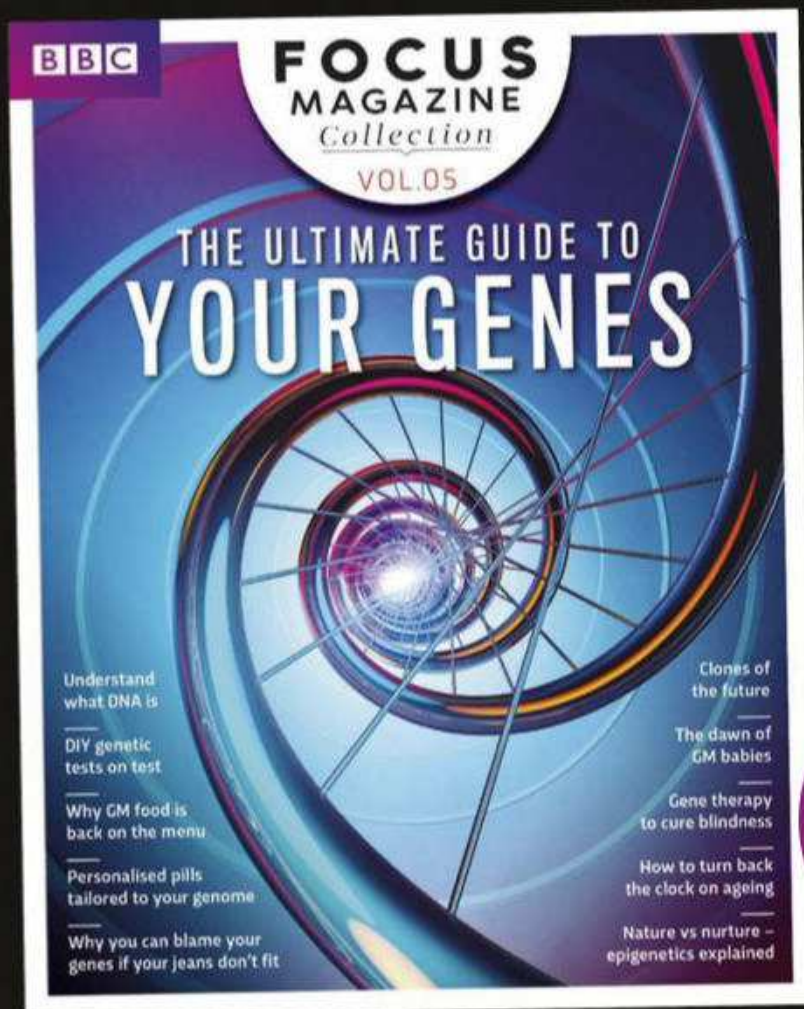
Ultimately, when choosing a history degree, it is important to know what you want from your time at university, not just what you want to study. Consider what your 'must haves' might be as well as the points on which you are willing to be flexible.

Choosing a university is a very big decision. Take your time, do the research and find the degree and department that is the best match for you. ■

Dr Meleisa Ono-George is director of student experience, and senior teaching fellow in Caribbean history at the University of Warwick

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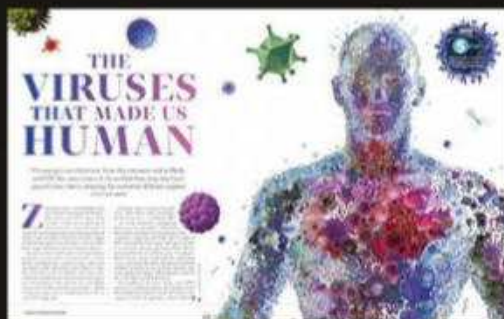
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Lessons from abroad

Students past and present share their experiences of studying overseas, while non-British students reveal the benefits of attending a UK university



Katie Fry

FROM: Sydney, Australia
STUDIED: BA (Hons) History at University of York

“I love the Tudor period, so studying in York meant I was able to access sources that would not have been available to me in Australia. Living in such a historical city gave me a greater appreciation for what I was studying. Walking through York Minster where Henry VIII walked, or visiting Clifford’s Tower where the Jewish massacre of 1190 occurred definitely brought history to life for me.

Studying in the UK took me outside my comfort zone and developing my independence was one of the benefits of moving abroad. The downside for me was the homesickness – January blues being a real thing, as Sydney is a long way from York. The financial implications were also a big consideration; despite being born in the UK, I was still subject to international student fees.



Laura Whitaker

FROM: Brighton, UK
STUDYING: BA History at the University of Queensland, Australia (third year)

“Moving to Australia was a big decision but one that has benefited me in many ways: in December 2018 I will graduate with an internationally recognised degree in history.

Moving halfway across the world encourages independence, which, in turn, has had a positive impact on my social skills and confidence. Not only have I had the opportunity to meet some amazing people, I’ve been lucky enough to have had the chance to explore my heritage (I am of dual-nationality) and what it means to be an Australian.

Studying abroad is certainly not an experience for the faint-hearted. Every time I visit the UK or return to Australia I feel as though I am torn between two places. However, getting the chance to explore a new country and gaining a world-class degree is an incredible opportunity and one I would recommend to anyone who enjoys travel, meeting new people and exploring new places.



Sara Davis

FROM: Texas, US
STUDIED: MA in History, University of Bristol

“I was drawn to the more rigorous, fast-paced degrees in history the UK has to offer. In the US, an MA can take between two and three years; I was able to complete the same degree in just over a year by studying in the UK.

During that year I was immersed in a programme that allowed me to experience the history I studied first-hand. I was able to visit the cathedrals I had been reading about, transcribe medieval texts older than the US, and talk with world-class scholars.



Studying in Venice was a course highlight for our deputy editor, Charlotte Hodgman



Charlotte Hodgman

FROM: Kent, UK
STUDIED: BA (Hons) History at the University of Warwick, with a term in Venice

“I was lucky enough to spend the autumn term of my final year studying with Warwick tutors in Venice and it’s an experience I shall never forget. Living and studying in the city gave me a new appreciation for the history I was learning about, while two years’ worth of Italian classes meant I was able to – or at least try to – interpret original sources.

The time I spent in Venice sealed my love of Renaissance history, developed my language and life skills and gave me a host of memories I shall never forget.



Rachel Rivers

FROM: Montana, US
STUDIED: History of the English Nobility and Renaissance Texts and Cultures, University of Reading

“Studying abroad introduced me to a world I had only visited through the pages of history books and novels.

I am from a small town in Montana, US, and my family doesn’t travel, so studying abroad always seemed like a far-off dream. However, I was able to get onto the study abroad programme at my home university of Carroll College and in the winter of 2014 that dream came true.

My study abroad experience changed me in so many ways: I flew on my first airplane; I visited a foreign country; and I was able to visit the historical sites I had read about for years. Standing in the spot where Anne Boleyn lost her head gave me goose bumps and brought hundreds of years of history to life for me. Experiencing a place and absorbing its history and culture is truly the only way to understand and appreciate a country.

Studying abroad also impacted my academic life: the British university system is vastly different from America. I believe that my time in Reading made me a stronger student when I returned home and made me hungry to learn more about a country I’ve loved since I was a child.



Harisa Ashraf

FROM: London, UK
STUDIED: BA History at King’s College London, with a term at the University of Toronto, Canada

“Studying abroad was the highlight of my degree. Academically, studying abroad helped me understand history from a different perspective and explore modules I wouldn’t have had the opportunity to in the UK. The experience was also vital in terms of my career progression. I loved it so much I went on to spend two incredible years working in the university’s Study Abroad office – helping students gain their own experiences overseas – and from there went on to a job in the civil service. ■



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Realising potential

The 14th-century Bodiam Castle, Sussex. "All historians and students of history have to think about how the society they are studying functions," says Dr Alice Taylor

OPINION

"In a world where fake news can influence elections, the methods of the historian are needed more than ever"

Dr Alice Taylor explains how looking at the past can equip you for the future

On 11 June 2018, the House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs published a report entitled 'Treating Students Fairly: the Economics of Post-School Education'. The report made many recommendations: it judged the government's aim of marketising higher education to be unsuitable to the nature of the sector; called for the reinstatement of means-tested loans and grants; and proposed that high interest rates on current student loans be reduced. But it also said that full-time degrees were monopolising the higher education market, and not providing graduates with the necessary skills to enter the labour market.

The report did not single out degrees in arts and humanities subjects as causing 'skills mismatches'. Despite this, though, some newspaper articles did focus on history, seizing on juicy quotations from one of the report's 'informal feedback' sessions. The study of history was, accordingly,

singled out. Headlines appeared with such provocative statements as "the UK has too many biology and history graduates and not enough workers with vocational skills".

Worries about the economic value of arts and humanities degrees seem to be increasing; certainly, they do not appear to be a high funding priority. Let us not forget former cabinet minister Robert Halfon saying back in January that "if someone wants to do medieval history that's fine... but all the incentives from government and so on should go to areas the country needs and will bring it most benefit".

Comments like these devalue and mask those vital sectors of our economy and society which are either staffed by history and humanities graduates, or are

dependent on a broader social and cultural interest in the past continuing. Graduates in history work in multiple sectors, many of them high-paying (law and the civil service, to name but two), and many of them directly related to their degree itself (curation and conservation, museums, heritage, archival work, not to mention being a history teacher or, even, a professional historian!). A report published in 2016 found that the heritage tourism industry actually supports more than one in every 100 jobs in the UK.

Meanwhile, devaluing the economic contribution of history teachers devalues the economic value of basic literacy (and indeed numeracy) which history teachers promote every day of their working lives.

But why *study* history at university level? What is its value in a world where new technologies dominate our professional and social lives, and an ability

It should be no surprise that new industries "see the value of a historical education", says Dr Alice Taylor





to code is seen as having the same high status and capacity for social advancement as the ability to read once did?

The negative response would be that history can't carry this kind of value, not any more: far more *valuable*, surely, to study a STEM subject (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Yet one of the most influential thinkers of the past few years, Yuval Noah Harari – who operates on a truly global scale, with his books *Sapiens* and *Homo Deus* translated into nearly 50 languages – is a historian. What makes a trained historian one of the world's most-read voices on the relationship between the past, present and future?

The answer lies, as always, in the methods of historical practice coupled with the historian's profound concern with how past societies functioned. Historians are trained to treat what they read critically. This means not just reading, looking at or listening to a source – whether a newspaper report, a medieval charter, an interview or a 16th-century woodcut – but questioning it. A history degree trains you to ask questions of your material: where does it come from? Who wrote it, designed it, wanted it? Who paid for it and why? How powerful and successful was this kind of source or message? What kinds of evidence, data and perception lie behind different views? In a world where fake news can influence elections, the methods of the historian – what history degrees train their students to acquire – are needed more than ever before.

Thinking outside the box

Historians aren't just people who analyse sources; we have to think about the phenomenon of society itself, in all its varieties, and communicate what we think about it. Regardless of what period or place a historian specialises in, all historians and students of history have to think about how the society they are studying functions. Not only that society's economic bases (who is rich, who is poor; how are the rich, rich and the poor, poor; how were clothes made and acquired, buildings built and everything paid for) but also how that society legitimates its very existence.

Historians of all periods are no strangers to how rulers and ruling classes legitimate their decisions through the use of the most up-to-date communication methods. The Emperor Augustus, back in the first century AD, proclaimed himself to be the son of a god and had an autobiography written to tell the world how great he was – a piece of political publicity so successful we're still reading it today.



A curator examines a dress at the Fashion Museum, Bath. History graduates are equipped to work in multiple job sectors including law, the civil service and heritage

The historian's skills are profoundly connected to understanding and working within a changing society

Historians try and understand how things happen and what their consequences were. This is something that is important and valued. It's important not just in an empirical sense: that historians have the knowledge to correct gross misinterpretations of the past bandied about as truths on the internet and by political elites alike. It's also important for the direction society is moving in, right now.

Members of tech companies are increasingly writing articles about the importance of employing liberal arts majors (in the US) or humanities graduates (in the UK) in addition to graduates from engineering and computer science. In short, they *want* to employ people who can both learn new technical skills but who are also trained to think creatively and professionally about what the social and cultural consequences of these new technologies might be, what particular social or political issue might need

addressing in its design, and who might be interested in the data gathered by a new social media app or fitness-tracker.

Recently, the journalist and academic John Naughton wondered whether a history or philosophy background might have helped Mark Zuckerberg foresee and thus prevent Facebook data being used to influence elections and world politics. This idea – that history and historical practice is *necessary* to the direction, ethics and consequences of new technologies – is gathering pace.

We live in a rapidly changing world. The first iPhone was released only 11 years ago. It is a mistake to think that the way a history degree is conducted and assessed isn't changing equally rapidly: we teach different kinds of history, hear different voices, and write new narratives of the past which challenge past orthodoxies.

We write essays, articles and books, but also write blog posts, design websites and apps, and create new ways for many different sections of the public to interact with the past in collaboration with librarians, archivists and curators. The skills of the historian are profoundly connected to understanding and working within this changing society. That new industries are beginning to see the value of a historical education is surprising only to those who have rarely thought in detail about what a historical approach to the world means. ■

Dr Alice Taylor is a reader in medieval history at King's College London

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BOOKS



Historians Sam Willis (left) and James Daybell. "We challenged ourselves to write the histories of things we weren't necessarily sure even had a history," says Willis



INTERVIEW / SAM WILLIS AND JAMES DAYBELL

"Everything has a history. And we mean absolutely everything"

Sam and James talk to Ellie Cawthorne about their new book, which tells the eye-opening stories behind ordinary objects and everyday occurrences – from chimneys to dreams

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID HAMPTON

PROFILE SAM WILLIS

Sam Willis is a historian, author and broadcaster who has presented several TV programmes for the BBC and National Geographic, including *The Silk Road*. Sam's 14 books include *The Struggle For Sea Power* and *The Spanish Armada*.

PROFILE JAMES DAYBELL

James Daybell is professor of early modern British history at the University of Plymouth and a fellow of the Royal Historical Society. He is the author of eight books, and has appeared on a number of historical programmes on the BBC.

Your new book, *Histories of the Unexpected*, is based on your podcast of the same name. What is the concept behind it?

Sam Willis: It's deceptively simple. Basically, we believe that everything has a history. And not just every object – we mean absolutely everything, whether it's emotions, holes, clouds or the itch. In the book and podcast we challenged ourselves to write the histories of things that we weren't necessarily sure even *had* a history. It was a bit of a professional challenge between us; a game. Can you write the history of dust? Or snow? Or mountains?

James Daybell: We also wanted to highlight how everything links together in unexpected and often rather magical ways. For example, the history of the hand links to scrofula and the royal touch, the history of clouds is actually about miasma and cholera, and – believe it or not – the history of the bubble is all about the French Revolution.

The book covers 30 different topics, and we wanted each chapter to lead on to the next. Some of our topics naturally flowed into each other, but some needed some extra wizardry to connect together. How do clocks link into needlework for example, or how does rubbish connect to snow? It's a bit like a massive game of six degrees of separation. The clever thing (well I think it's clever anyway!) is that the whole book comes full circle. So we end with the history of the signature, which then links back to the very first chapter, on the hand.

Where did the idea for the project first come from?

SW: I was leading a tour around HMS *Victory*, explaining all about the ship and the battles it had fought – the standard things you might expect. But round the back of *Victory*'s stern is an amazing window. It's like a conservatory plonked on the back of a tank. Someone asked me why the window was there. I have a PhD in naval history and have written countless books on the subject, but I had no idea. So I looked into it. I began by researching the history of the window, but then I realised that it's actually more complex than that: you can only explain why there is a window on the back of a warship if you understand the history of looking – and looking through windows – in the 18th century. Unsurprisingly, no one

has written a history of looking through windows on 18th-century warships! When I suggested the idea to James, I was worried he would think I was totally off the wall. But he replied: "I know exactly what you're talking about, because the history of oranges is all about the gunpowder plot!"

When you've picked a topic, where on earth do you start?

SW: We begin by opening the box of our heads and rummaging around inside. We're trained very differently as historians, and we discovered that if we took any theme or subject, we had completely different things to say about it. When you have two historians coming at the same thing from two contrasting perspectives, you begin to realise that there is a mind-blowing complexity to history. This is a really good way of exposing that.

JD: It's all about intellectual curiosity. For example, if you think off the top of your head: what is the history of lions about? Well, I had just been on holiday in Sweden, so for me it was all about 17th-century Swedish leader Gustavus Adolphus – known as the 'Lion of the North' – and the sinking of his ship *Vasa*, adorned with a glorious pouncing lion as its figurehead.

SW: I meanwhile had just been reading about *The Wizard of Oz*, and how the cowardly lion is a hugely complex commentary on the state of America at the time. So for me, lions were all about the US economy at the turn of the 20th century. And then I got sucked into the history of hunting lions, pet lions and the symbolism of lions on shields. It sounds quite scatter-brained but it's actually all linked together.

What were your favourite topics to research?

SW: I think the one I'm most proud of is 'the lean', because I really wasn't sure how

we were going to do it. We began with leaning buildings. If you think about the Shambles in York – a narrow medieval street with all the houses leaning over each other – there are no straight lines anywhere. Contrast that with 19th-century Paris, where everything was perpendicular. This architectural shift was all to do with the fear of the medieval; a fear of superstition and disease. Then we moved on to the history of the human lean, which was all about walking sticks and the way that disabled sailors were depicted in cartoons. And then we took a look at the Hollywood lean, starring James Dean. That was really very cool.

JD: One of my favourite topics was bubbles. For me, bubbles are all about childhood, so we started by looking at a wonderful collection of bubble blowers – lovely little collectible pipes that people would blow bubbles out of – in the Victoria and Albert Museum of Childhood. But we also wanted to think outside the box a bit. So we moved on to the concept of people living in a bubble. This got us thinking about early monasticism, the Oxford bubble and the Westminster bubble. Somehow, we eventually ended up at 18th-century ornamental hermits – people who would live in an aristocrat's garden, almost like a precursor to the garden gnome.

SW: Another has to be the history of chimneys. Of course, it's about chimney sweeps and architecture, but everyone knows that. Much more interesting is what you find up chimneys. Let me tell you, it's extraordinary! Shoes, cats, semi-burnt letters to father Christmas. Someone even found an incredibly rare 17th-century map of the world stuck up their chimney. They are basically archives, so go and look up your chimney!

The book doesn't just churn out a series of bizarre facts, does it? There's some serious history in here too.

SW: Yes, we certainly didn't want it to be a frivolous miscellany. It's thoughtful history that deals with some light-hearted subjects but also some very serious topics. For example, you can't write about the history of hair without acknowledging scalping, or the collections of hair left at Auschwitz.

"Believe it or not, the history of bubbles is all about the French Revolution"



The Maharaja of Jaipur on a lion hunt, in an image from c1780. Lions are just one of 30 unusual topics placed under the spotlight in *Histories of the Unexpected*

JD: Yes, it was very important to us not to shy away from some of the darker material. While researching the chapter on needlework, for example, we learnt all about memory cloths made by women who had lived through Apartheid. They stitched their life stories into fabric as part of the reconciliation process, creating a wonderful but incredibly harrowing record of what they lived through.

The chapter on needlework also led us to the material archives of the Foundling Museum. When mothers abandoned their children at the Foundling Hospital in the 18th century, many left their babies with little scraps of fabric that could be used to identify them later on. Several thousand examples still survive and they are wonderful, emotional pieces.

Why do you think this is a fresh way to write history?

SW: A lot of popular history is presented in a fairly predictable way. We've both written standard narrative history before, but with *Histories of the Unexpected* we wanted to mix things up a bit.

Essentially, we wanted to tap into the mind-blowing complexity that scholars and professional historians have achieved. They

use all sorts of different approaches, methodologies and research techniques, and we wanted to find a way of conveying the latest and most exciting research while still making it fun.

History is a much more creative process than it's often taken to be. People think it's just about regurgitating stories, and remembering facts and dates. But it's not – the way to be a great historian is to think creatively about the past. I'd like people to realise that writing history is an art form.

JD: Another thing we're really passionate about is making history enjoyable, and accessible to as broad a range of people as possible. As a historian, one of the biggest dinner party conversation stoppers is when people say: "Oh, I hated history at school." So it's been really heartwarming to hear from people who have read the book or listened to the podcast, and suddenly see history as something incredibly vibrant and exciting.

SW: When people complain to me that they didn't like history at school, I turn around and say: "Well, have you ever thought about the *history* behind your moaning?"

You already have more *Histories of the Unexpected* planned. What topics do you want to cover next?

JD: Oh, now that's a big question. We currently have a list of about 200 subjects. I read *Moby Dick* this summer, so I want to do the history of whales next. Or eyes – that's all about surveillance. Handwriting is another one. And cows. I recently heard about someone getting their husband's ashes ground into tattoo ink, so tattoos are definitely up there too. Or what about teeth?

SW: Or saliva? How about spitting?

JD: Nice – we'll put spitting on the list. **H**



Histories of the Unexpected: How Everything Has a History by Sam Willis and James Daybell (Atlantic, 480 pages, £18.99)

ON THE PODCAST

James and Sam discuss *Histories of the Unexpected* on our podcast

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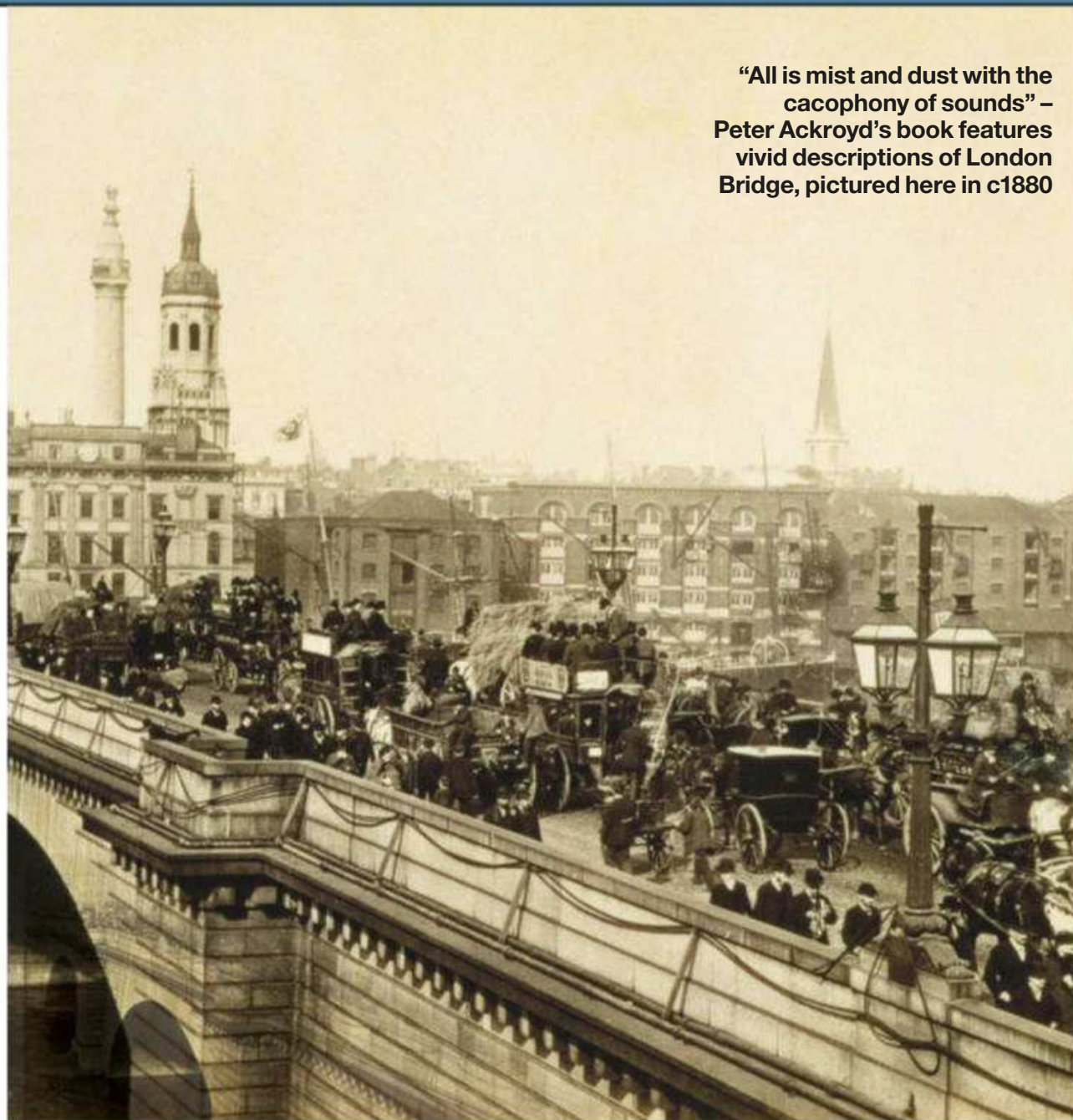
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LOTTERY FUNDED



"All is mist and dust with the cacophony of sounds" – Peter Ackroyd's book features vivid descriptions of London Bridge, pictured here in c1880



As you might imagine from Ackroyd, the book is written with a novelist's sensibility, full of resonant phrases, especially about London, about which the author has written so many books. Here's his evocative description of an omnibus on London Bridge in the mid-19th century: "All is mist and dust with the cacophony of sounds – the crack of the whip, the snorting of the horses, the cries of the children, the shouting out of destinations." Queen Victoria, swathed in mourning after Albert's death, becomes "the chrysalis for a black butterfly"; Lord Liverpool, prime minister from 1812 to 1827, "finally made up his mind and died".

There are shrewd insights: "The less (Victoria) had to do and the more remote her life became from that of her subjects, the more she was celebrated." And the occasional prejudice: the French apparently had "hysterics" when they discovered that the Orsini plot to assassinate Napoleon III in 1858 had been hatched in London – as well they might have had.

The author seems more of a fan of that old rogue Disraeli than Gladstone, and the Irish nationalists get short shrift (Charles Parnell is curiously scarcely present). Scotland and Wales don't get a look in – spoiler alert: it is, after all, a history of England – but then, as the century progresses, neither does the countryside and its rural folk. In such a capacious history it is hard to cavil, but sport, music, the theatre and fashion are scarcely mentioned either.

Ackroyd certainly masters his material, but it has to be said that his determination to cover the ground, especially the politics, becomes a bit of a trudge, for us and, I suspect, maybe also for him: endless parliamentary bills, the church, literature, the music

The Victorian era still exercises a compelling fascination for a people and a nation so like ourselves

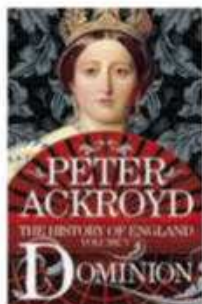
A familiar tale

STEPHEN BATES *considers an evocative history of the Victorian age packed with style, but lacking in new insights*

Dominion: The History of England Volume V

By Peter Ackroyd

Macmillan, 416 pages, £25



Just as it is said that there has been a book published about the American Civil War every day since it ended, surely the same must apply in spades to the Victorian era. The day before the day before yesterday still exercises a compelling fascination for a people and a nation so like ourselves – living in many of the same houses,

walking down the same streets – and yet so different. We know a huge amount about the period, and many of us have known, not so long ago, people who were born then. Some of their attitudes about Britain and its rightful place in the world shape our own. But still the period remains elusive, just beyond reach.

The latest addition to the groaning shelves of Victoriana now arrives in the shape of the fifth volume of novelist and historian Peter Ackroyd's history of England, which starts in the aftermath of the battle of Waterloo in 1815 – okay, a little before the beginning of Victoria's reign – and ends with her death in 1901.



COMING SOON...

"Next month I'll be talking to Michael Palin about some of the 19th century's most intrepid polar explorers - he documents their adventures in his upcoming book *Erebus: The Story of a Ship*. Plus we'll have more expert reviews of some of this autumn's most exciting history titles."

Ellie Cawthorne, staff writer

hall all get their paragraphs – what Victorians would have called their two ha'penny worth – but often not much more than that. Curiously, the effect is rather flattening: it becomes one damn thing after another, with infrequent pauses to allow a subject to breathe. The Tichborne Claimant however – the butcher who turned up from Australia in 1865 claiming to be the heir to an aristocratic inheritance, provoking a long-running legal case – gets a whole chapter to himself.

The book is also strangely old-fashioned: mainly a political rather than a social or economic history. Had it been published 50 years ago it would not have upended my O-level history syllabus.

It becomes one damn thing after another, with infrequent pauses to allow a subject to breathe

Although there are recent books in the bibliography, there are also works by GM Young and RCK Ensor – celebrated historians in their day, but writing in the 1930s – and, even further back, GM Trevelyan, whose *British History in the 19th Century* dates back to 1922. Missing from the list, for instance, is Boyd Hilton's impressive general history of the early 19th century, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?*, published as recently as 2006.

You won't be buying this Ackroyd work for his original research, but for his style and verve. Who is the book aimed at? Clearly fans of the author will be entranced, but there is a bit of a conundrum: to appreciate the book you need to know something about Victorian England, but if you do, it probably won't tell you much you don't already know. **H**

Stephen Bates is an author and historian. His books include *1815: Regency Britain in the Year of Waterloo* and *Two Nations: Britain in 1846* (both Head of Zeus, 2015)

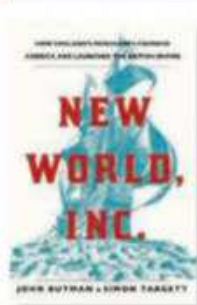
A whole new world

JERRY BROTTON enjoys a book that challenges the Mayflower myth and argues that America was built on profit, not piety

New World, Inc.: How England's Merchants Founded America and Launched the British Empire

by John Butman and Simon Targett

Atlantic Books, 432 pages, £25



Part of the fabric of America's national identity is that its English-speaking foundations can be traced back to the pious Pilgrims that arrived on the *Mayflower* in 1620.

As this fascinating book's title suggests, the authors are keen to revise the myth of religious dissenters founding modern America. They have written what they call "the prequel to the Pilgrims", whose 'misleading' story has omitted three main features that drove the previous 70 years of Tudor and Stuart involvement in the Americas: commerce, business and enterprise. This isn't surprising given the authors' pedigree as business experts, but their case is a persuasive one.

Their story starts in the 1550s, with the crisis in Tudor England's declining wool trade. Due to inflation, and the religious crises triggered by the turbulent transitions between Henry VIII's offspring – which ultimately led to the creation of Elizabeth I's pariah Protestant state – statesmen and merchants realised that other markets were required to ensure economic survival. In 1552, England's first joint stock company (marvellously titled 'The Mysterie') was formed, intent on sailing to 'Cathay' (China) via the northeast passage. The expedition failed disastrously, but it inspired the

creation of a new Company of Cathay, and drew the existing Muscovy Company into ambitious expeditions into North America to challenge Spanish power in the region, and pursue gold, silver and more prosaic trade like fish.

Butman and Targett highlight how senior Elizabethan statesmen like Burghley and Walsingham took different positions to London's merchants and more flamboyant courtiers – such as Walter Raleigh – in pursuing the dream of English settlements in the New World. They also identify key moments in this dream: Drake's first English global circumnavigation, the powerful arguments for the plantation of Virginia by imperial propagandist Richard Hakluyt in the 1580s, and Raleigh's overweening ambition to settle the area. Their descriptions of the settlements at Roanoke and Jamestown capture the grimness mixed with aspiration – and often downright disingenuousness – that characterised contemporary accounts of those who lived and died there.

The final chapters on the vital Jacobean years that saw the creation of the Virginia Company and the *Mayflower's* departure are absorbing yet brief, and there isn't enough on the role played by companies working in the Islamic world that framed many financial ventures in the west. Nevertheless, the chapter deconstructing the Pilgrim myth is a powerful and convincing one. The argument that trade

rather than religious morality founded America may be of strange comfort to the White House's current incumbent. **H**

Jerry Brotton's books include *This Orient Isle: Elizabethan England and the Islamic World* (Penguin, 2016)

A c1585 engraving of the English arriving in Virginia





Henry II and his queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine, hold court in a 12th-century illustration. Eleanor undermined her husband's rule by helping their sons launch a revolt against him

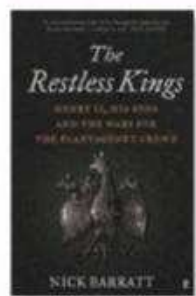
The family firm

RICHARD BARBER is drawn in to a fast-paced account of how Plantagenet family tensions engulfed medieval England in civil war

The Restless Kings: Henry II, His Sons and the Wars for the Plantagenet Crown

by Nick Barratt

Faber, 336 pages, £20



As an expert on family history, with training as a medieval historian, Nick Barratt is well placed to consider the most notorious royal family in English history – that of Henry II. Henry

was remarkably successful in assembling a vast array of territories: his rule, direct or indirect, extended from Scotland almost to the Mediterranean, and was put together in only a couple of decades. The lands he ruled have often been described as an empire: Nick Barratt

shrewdly likens them to a family firm. What he doesn't add is the saying that the first generation makes it, the second generation spends it, and the third generation blows it; in Henry's case, for 'generation' read 'king'.

Henry's so-called empire depended entirely on personal power, and fell apart as quickly as it had been created. He spent 20 years acquiring his domains, and the next 20 trying to ensure a succession which would hold them together. Henry had his eldest surviving

Henry's sons were just as ambitious as himself, and frustrated by their lack of real power

son – Henry 'the Young King' – crowned king of England during his lifetime so that there could be no doubt as to his heir, and seems to have envisaged a system whereby his brothers would hold their lands from the new king. But his sons were just as restless and ambitious as himself and – frustrated by their lack of real power – their ambitions exploded into civil war in 1173. In this, they were encouraged by their mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine. Yet this apparently formidable allegiance was no match for Henry's skills as a military commander and devious negotiator.

Henry had built a very advanced state system in England, and replicated some of it in Normandy. However, the duchy of Aquitaine and the Celtic lands lay outside the scope of that formidable machine; Nick Barratt explains the workings of this very clearly, as well as the impossibility of holding everything together. Henry himself was never certain as to how it was to be done.

Equally, it was never certain that it would all fall apart. Richard was the greatest military commander of the age, and even John showed surprising military skills. Several times he came near to success in his struggle with the barons, and unforeseen events as much as his own personality were his downfall.

It is a tangled tale, and not easily told: the author does not help his readers by highlighting great events out of sequence, and then going back to explain how they had arisen. He describes the Angevin kings as "racing around" and tends to do the same himself. At other times, he works like a novelist, embellishing the bare facts with imaginary adjectives and details. Elsewhere, he uses original sources to good effect, but fails to take bias into account: Gerald of Wales, whose vivid pages about Henry he often cites, wrote with bitter hatred; earlier historians have called his account "blinkered" and "wildly partisan".

Overall, however, this is a tale well told, with an interesting take on the central issue. **H**

Richard Barber's books include *Henry II* (Allen Lane, 2015) and *Edward III and the Triumph of England* (Allen Lane, 2013)

Danish king Sweyn and his troops arrive in England, as depicted in a 15th-century manuscript. A new book explores how medieval stories “cast the Viking conquest in a new light”



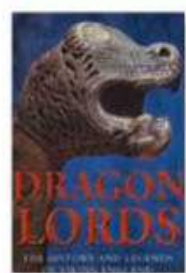
Local legends

SARAH FOOT enjoys an insightful exploration of how medieval myths shaped the way we remember the Vikings

Dragon Lords: The History and Legends of Viking England

by Eleanor Parker

IB Tauris, 288 pages, £20



A fragmentary piece of stone carving found in Winchester, spiritual heart of the ancient Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex and burial place of Alfred the Great, connects the city with England's Viking past. Originally part of a larger frieze, it depicts a scene from the Norse legend of Sigmund, showing his bound figure with honey smeared around his mouth to distract a hungry wolf from killing him. Sigmund and his son Sigurðr, the dragon-slayer, were well-known heroes of Germanic legend who were understood in the Middle Ages as ancestors of later kings of Denmark. If this carving were, as Eleanor Parker suggests, originally designed as part of the tomb of the Danish king Cnut, who

conquered England in 1016, it would be an impressive testimony to Cnut's political influence. It also reminds us of how effectively the Danish elite became integrated within Anglo-Saxon culture.

Dragon Lords does not directly ask why the Vikings came to Britain. Rather, it explores how medieval English writers explained the Vikings' motives and deeds through stories and legends, and how these myths cast the Viking conquest in a new light. As Parker demonstrates, these narratives became connected with different regions of England, especially those where Scandinavian settlement was most intense: parts of the north, the East Midlands and East Anglia.

East Anglian traditions focused particularly on the legends of King

The Danish elite were well integrated within Anglo-Saxon culture

Edmund, who died at Danish hands in 869. In local retellings of a legend that also circulated in Scandinavia, Edmund's Danish killers (sons of the semi-legendary warrior Ragnar Lothbrok) acquired a role in the promotion of Edmund as a national royal saint.

Similarly, although the historical Siward was most closely associated with Northumbria, where he was earl in the time of Cnut, it was in the east Midlands that people took most interest in his legend. There, Siward's story was told as if Northumbria were a distant and exotic location, where supernatural creatures abounded. Most fascinatingly of all, Parker shows how the legend of the Danish prince Havelok developed in Grimsby. The emphasis of these stories

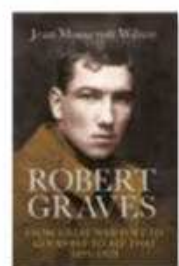
Mud, blood and poetry

MARK BOSTRIDGE recommends a biography that places Robert Graves's stirring war poetry back at the centre of his story

Robert Graves: From Great War Poet to Good-bye to All That 1895-1929

by Jean Moorcroft Wilson

Bloomsbury Continuum, 480 pages, £25



In this centenary year of the end of the First World War, Jean Moorcroft Wilson, veteran biographer of the war poets, has turned her attention to Robert Graves, who celebrated the coming of peace and the ending of the 'horror' by

recognising that he would never be truly free of all the associations and memories of his wartime experiences.

Graves, she argues, is now most famous for *Good-bye to All That*, the outspoken, at times fanciful, but endlessly re-readable autobiography with which he drew a definitive line under the story of the first half of his life.

Graves's war poetry was often suppressed by Graves himself during his long and prolific postwar writing career. However, it is not only technically brilliant, with its realism an important influence on Siegfried Sassoon – and

through Sassoon, on Wilfred Owen – but also a significant biographical key to our understanding of his extraordinarily tempestuous life.

Drawing on the poems and on recently discovered documentary material, Moorcroft Wilson shows the ways in which the after-effects of the shock of war propelled Graves into a first marriage, to Nancy Nicholson, founded on childrearing and family stability, and then into a different kind of warfare, as he grappled with the increasingly egotistical and outrageous demands of his mistress and 'goddess', Laura Riding.

Enlisting a week after war was declared, at the age of 19, Graves fought in two of its bloodiest battles, Loos in 1915 and the Somme a year later (where he was presumed dead). What is so deft and commanding in Moorcroft Wilson's

BRIDGEMAN



is much more on the economic aspects of Danish activity, especially the importance of merchants and trade, than on military affairs we might imagine as more typically 'Viking'.

Parker has crafted an impressively readable and accessible account of these little-known legends, presenting medieval English traditions about Scandinavian warfare and the consequences of Danish settlement. Her interpretations draw on her unparalleled knowledge of these complex sources, but she wears her learning lightly and always writes with a general reader in mind. **H**

Sarah Foot is regius professor of ecclesiastical history at the University of Oxford

account, and the mark of its distinction, is the way in which she unpicks Graves's war poems. She enables us to see them both as reflective of his childhood and upbringing – the nightmares that haunted his sleep are linked to his terror as he lies badly wounded on the Somme – and as presaging his future belief in a muse of poetic inspiration in their preoccupation with myth, legend and ancient history.

The war would never "be over once and for all", as Graves had hoped. Here, Moorcroft Wilson gives us a study on a par with her other outstanding biographies, and re-establishes Graves's importance as a poet of 1914–18. **H**

Mark Bostridge's books include *Vera Brittain and the First World War* (Bloomsbury, 2014) and *The Fateful Year* (Viking, 2014)

ALAMY

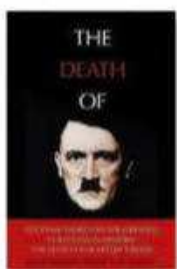
Case closed

NIGEL JONES is unimpressed by a fresh investigation into a conspiracy-laden 'mystery' that was solved long ago

The Death of Hitler: The Final Word on the Ultimate Cold Case

By Jean-Christophe Brisard and Lana Parshina

Hodder & Stoughton, 336 pages, £25



Around 3.30pm on 30 April 1945, Adolf Hitler, a cornered rat in a trap, sat on a sofa in his Berlin bunker and put a bullet through his head. His bride, Eva Braun, seated next to him, bit down on a cyanide capsule. His staff carried their bodies to the surface, placed them in a shell hole, doused them with petrol and imperfectly cremated them. These facts have been known for decades, but, like Elvis, the fallen führer has lived on in many people's imaginations.

The myth of Hitler's survival – that he enjoyed a long and uncharacteristically quiet retirement in South America after arriving there by U-boat – was originally propagated by Josef Stalin. Suspicious by nature, Stalin refused to believe that Hitler was dead until it was confirmed by his own intelligence agencies who had Hitler's charred remains in their custody. Even then, for propagandist purposes, Stalin continued to spread the story that the dead führer was alive and well and being protected by the wicked west.

The legend of Hitler's survival lives on among conspiracy theorists: only last year a popular US TV series was still peddling the same old garbage.

In fact, the basic circumstances of Hitler's death were established just after the

war by the British historian Hugh Trevor-Roper in *The Last Days of Hitler*, based on his interviews with survivors of the bunker who had escaped to the west. But concrete evidence, in the shape of Hitler's carbonised bones, was in the hands of the Russians, and with the Cold War beginning, they weren't telling.

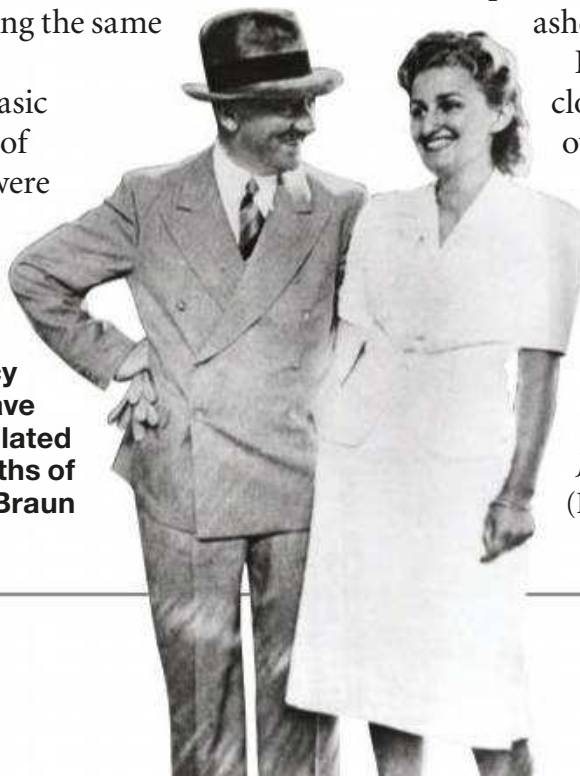
French investigative journalist Jean-Christophe Brisard and Russian researcher Lana Parshina set out to find, photograph, and publicise the sparse evidence that still survives, buried in the Moscow archives of Russia's FSB (formerly KGB) intelligence service. This book has two strands: a familiar chronological history of the last days in the bunker, and a protracted and frankly tedious account of the intrepid duo's battle to get the obstructive bureaucrats guarding those archives to give them a glimpse of the crown jewels in their care.

It took two frustrating years, and when they did get to see the smoking guns, it must have been anti-climactic. Hidden in an old computer disc box was a skull fragment complete with bullet hole, and four teeth (Hitler had notoriously poor oral hygiene), along with the KGB reports detailing the finding of the führer's remains, and what became of the rest of them. Buried in an unmarked grave in east Germany, Hitler and Braun's scorched bones, along with those of the Goebbels family, were exhumed in 1970 on the orders of KGB boss Yuri Andropov, incinerated again, and the ashes poured into a local river.

If this is indeed the thrilling closure of a cold case, as the over-hyped book publicity claims, Hercule Poirot need not be troubled: most of us knew whodunnit ages ago. **H**

Nigel Jones is the author of *Countdown to Valkyrie: The July Plot to Assassinate Hitler* (Frontline, 2009)

Conspiracy theorists have long speculated on the deaths of Hitler and Braun



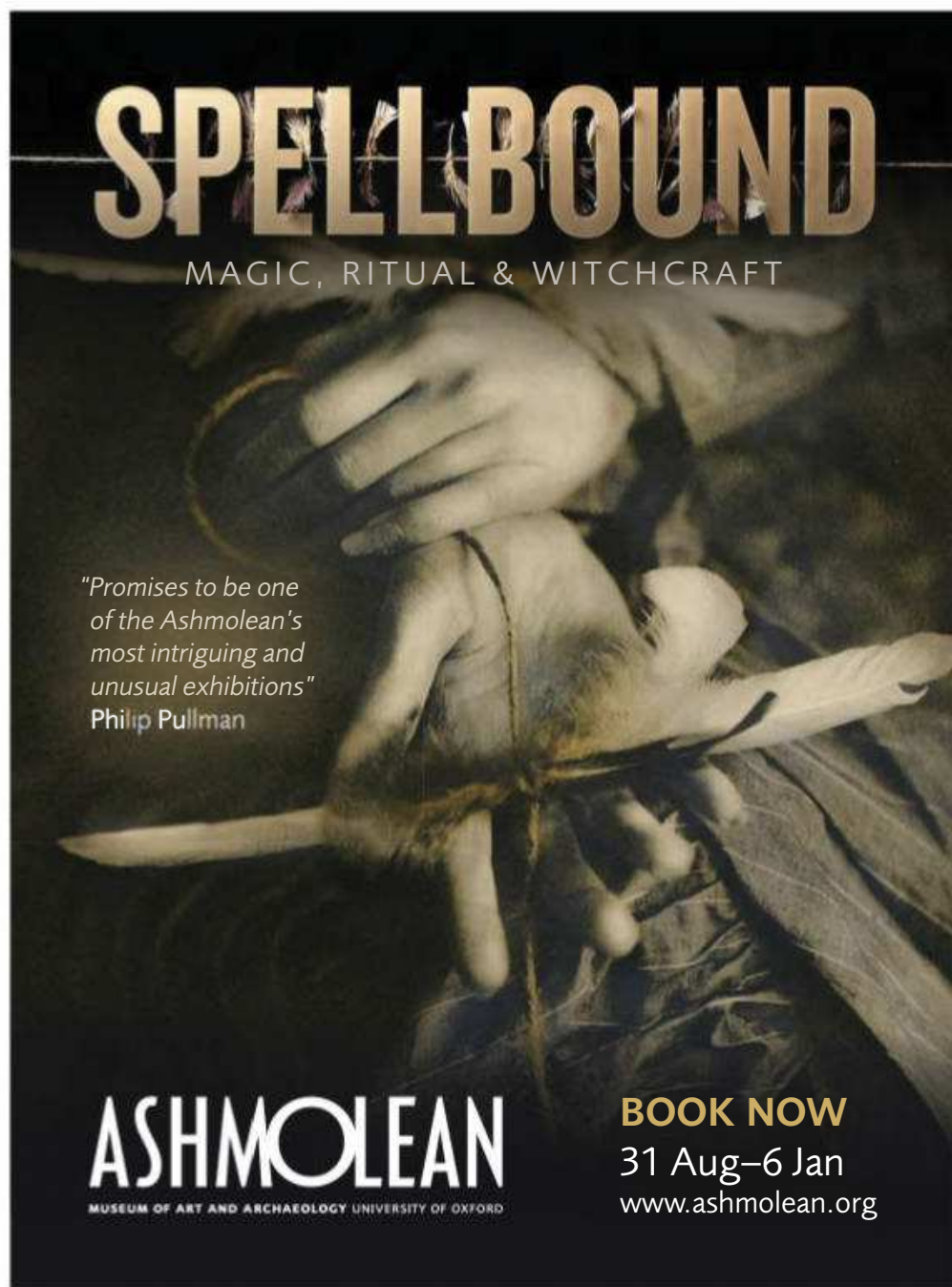
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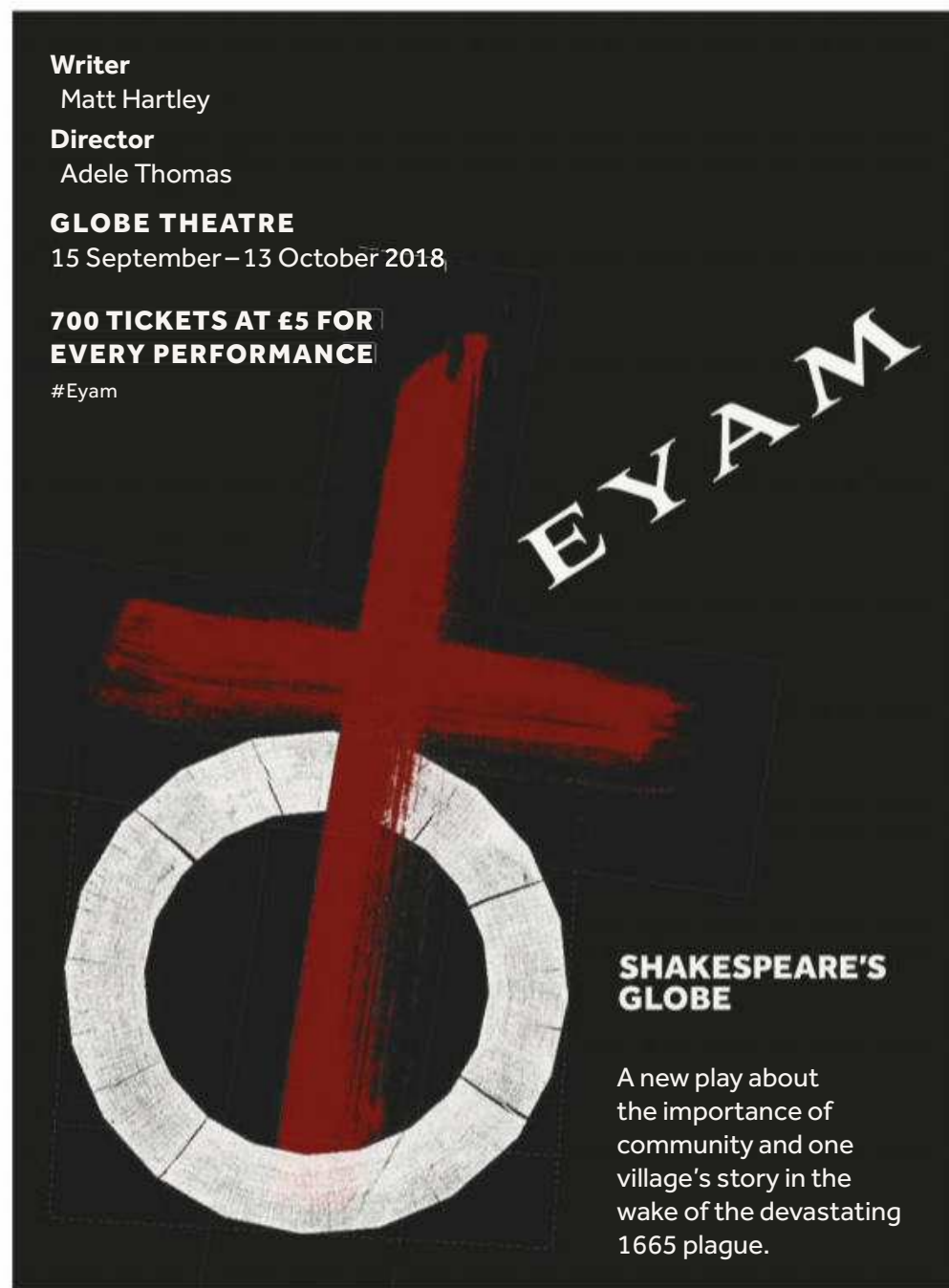
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PAPERBACKS



One Hot Summer: Dickens, Darwin, Disraeli and the Great Stink of 1858

by Rosemary Ashton

Yale, 352 pages, £10.99



The Great Stink of 1858, when the foul-smelling Thames accommodated the capital's sewage, has

become a landmark of Victoria's reign. This infamous year has been related by Rosemary Ashton to the lives of three of the era's most prominent figures: Dickens, Darwin and Disraeli. The alliteration of their names is a nice conceit but their connection with the Great Stink is strained and directly applies only to Disraeli, by whose initiative in parliament Sir Joseph Bazalgette was given authority to clean up the river. Darwin, safe from the stench in Kent, was a year from publishing *On the Origin of Species*, and Dickens was too busy concealing his affair with Nelly Ternan to write much.

Nevertheless, the book is a fine portrayal of life in London at a difficult time, with a cast of fascinating characters including Faraday, Thackeray, Brunel, Bulwer-Lytton and, particularly, Bulwer-Lytton's troublesome wife. Excellent value.

Stephen Halliday is the author of *The Great Stink of London: Sir Joseph Bazalgette and the Cleansing of the Victorian Metropolis*, (History Press, 2001)

Praetorian: The Rise and Fall of Rome's Imperial Bodyguard

by Guy de la Bédoyère

Yale, 344 pages, £10.99



The enthroned Supreme Leader Snoke – surrounded by scarlet-clad praetorian guards in Star Wars's *The*

Last Jedi – shows how Rome's praetorian guard remains a powerful symbol of a ruthless, loyal bodyguard, prepared to defend their leader to the death. And yet, as Guy de la Bédoyère reveals in *Praetorian*, the role of the praetorian guard was more complex than this comparison would imply.

Yes, the praetorians were the emperor's bodyguards – although they were as likely to assassinate as to defend their leader – but individual praetorians are also known to have acted as fire-fighters, executioners, militarised police, guards for the grain route, and even a land surveyor and lead-worker. By fully engaging with some of the most dramatic writings of Roman

historians, de la Bédoyère tracks some of the most memorable moments in Roman imperial history, from the assassination of Caligula to the last praetorians drowning in the Tiber at the battle of the Milvian Bridge, which saw Constantine triumph at Rome.

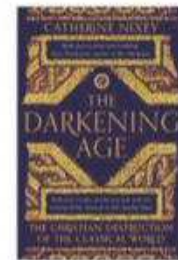
But alongside the vivid narratives of writers like Tacitus and Herodian, which tend to focus upon the ambitions of notorious praetorian prefects, de la Bédoyère expands our understanding of individual guards by also looking at their tombstones and certificates of discharge from service. Consequently, this book combines an entertaining account of the ambitions of praetorian prefects alongside the more mundane lives of individual guardsmen, and so offers insights not just into political and military history, but also into the changing social and cultural landscape of imperial Rome.

Alison E Cooley is professor of classics and ancient history at the University of Warwick

The Darkening Age

by Catherine Nixey

Pan Macmillan, 352 pages, £9.99



The 18th-century excavators who unearthed Pompeii were shocked to find that the respectable

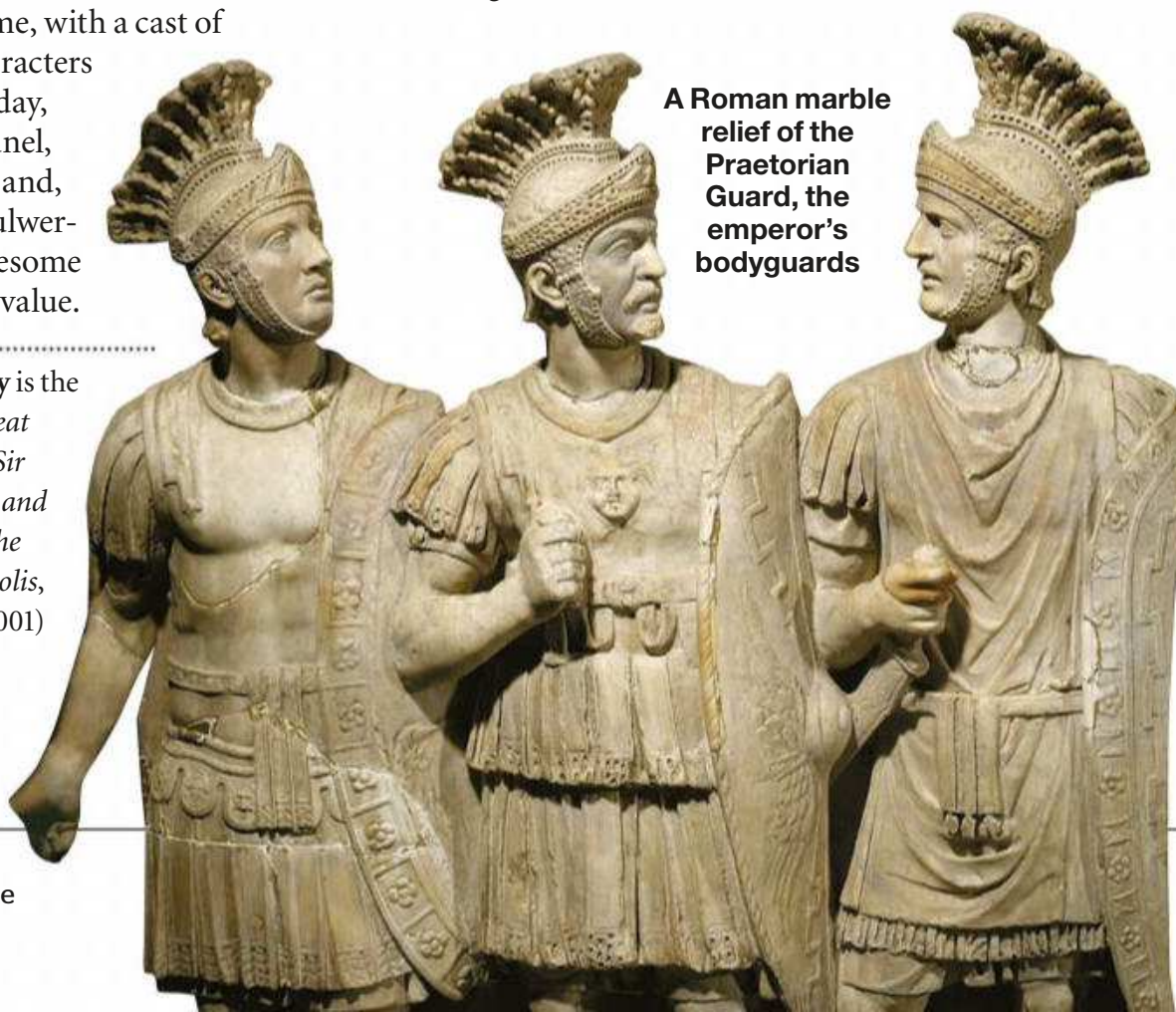
classes of the Roman world were not so respectable after all. Houses were adorned with sexually charged decorations – erotic frescoes, for example, or lamps in the shape of winged genitalia. If this was surprising, suggests Catherine Nixey, it was because ancient open-mindedness had been snuffed out by the prudery of Christians who, from the fourth century onward, became the new masters of Rome.

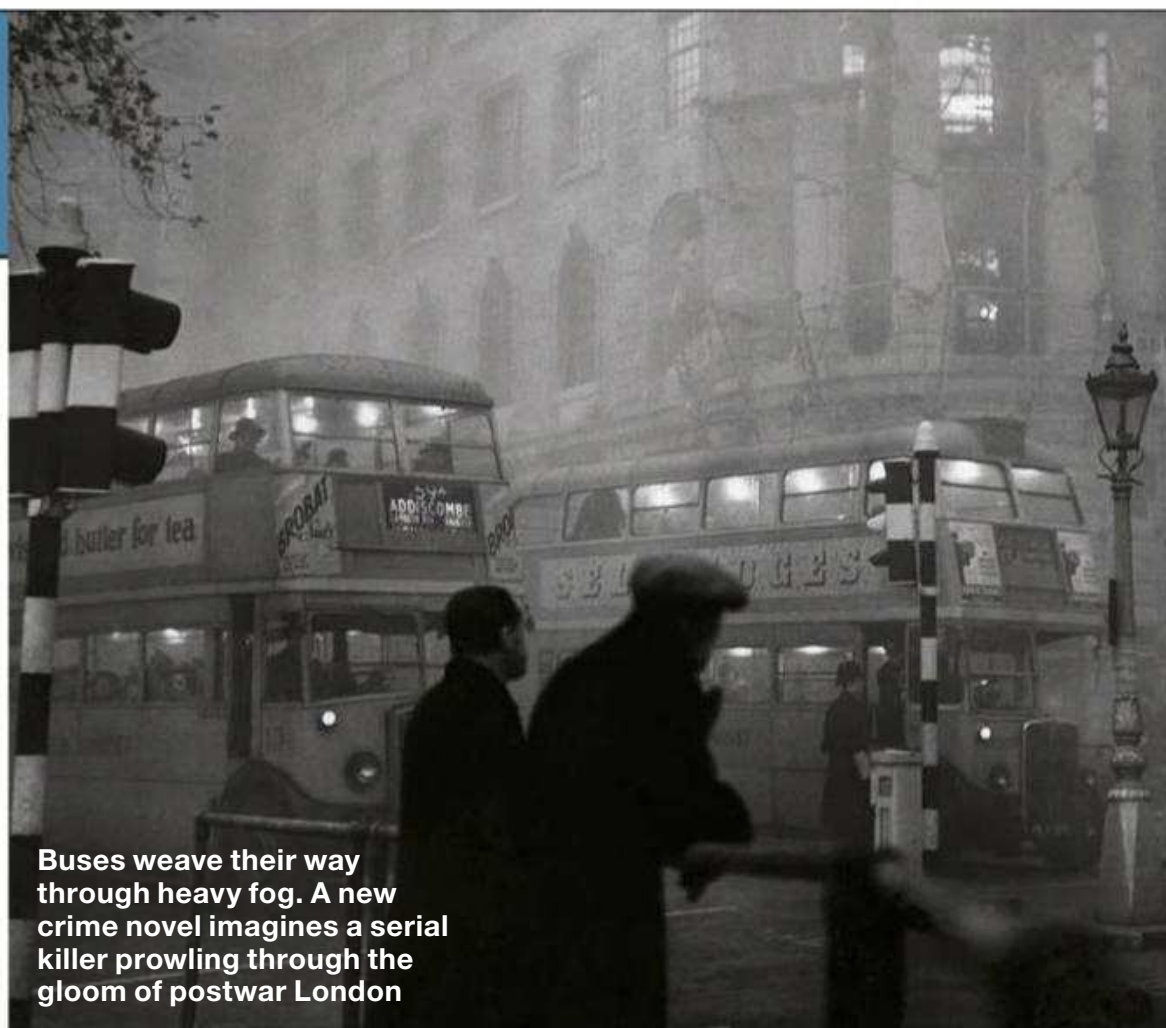
Nixey's lively study decries the efforts of Christian preachers to brand pagan culture as sinful and idolatrous. Lamentably, certain bishops used their eloquence to stir up restless crowds against their rivals. Where the book disappoints is in its analysis of how the battle-lines were drawn in fourth and fifth-century cities. Nixey seems to believe that Christianity, rather than demagoguery and personal ambition, was the cause of all this. Yet mob violence was by no means an exclusively Christian phenomenon.

Nixey's confusion here is jarring because her theme is so timely; understanding the cause of populist anger could not be more important in our own age. But the impulse to lay blame for populism at the door of a people or faith, rather than of populism itself, can only be part of the problem, never the solution. **H**

Professor Kate Cooper is head of history at Royal Holloway, University of London

A Roman marble relief of the Praetorian Guard, the emperor's bodyguards





Buses weave their way through heavy fog. A new crime novel imagines a serial killer prowling through the gloom of postwar London

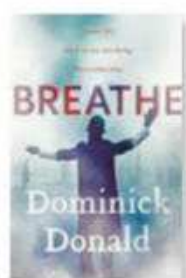
FICTION

Mist and murder

NICK RENNISON enjoys an atmospheric crime thriller set in a postwar London blanketed by deadly smog

Breathe

by Dominick Donald
Hodder, 528 pages, £17.99



In 1952, London is a city still scarred by the Second World War – littered with bombsites, rubble and ruined buildings. Many of its inhabitants have been equally damaged by their experiences in the

conflict. Not yet out of his twenties, probationer policeman Dick Bourton is haunted by what he saw as a soldier in Europe and, later, in Korea. To his colleagues on the beat in the rough streets of Notting Dale he is an oddity. At home, Dick is learning to share his life with his new wife, Anna, a White Russian brought up in the far east, who proves an exotic addition to the drab streets of London. Anna herself finds the city a culture shock and she is in poor health, made worse by the pea-soup fogs that descend upon it.

The fog always brings plenty of deaths in its wake. People with weak lungs and hearts succumb to its effects. But Dick is

puzzled by the circumstances surrounding one of these deaths. In his own time, he undertakes further investigations and becomes convinced that through the gloom, a predator is stalking his victims.

Meanwhile, a peculiar man named Christie – touting his own quack method of coping with lung complaints – meets Anna in a cafe. Desperate and fearful of her husband discovering just how serious her illness might be, she agrees to visit Christie at his home in Rillington Place. As the worst fog London has ever known falls like a pall upon the city streets, and its inhabitants struggle simply to breathe, both Dick and Anna are treading dangerous paths through the darkness.

Dominick Donald's novel is a remarkably convincing re-creation of a London that, although well within living memory, has vanished forever. Rich in detail and dialogue that successfully resurrect the period, it's a thriller that holds the reader's attention throughout more than 500 pages. **H**

Nick Rennison is the author of *Carver's Truth* (Corvus, 2016)

THREE MORE NOVELS ON CRIME IN LONDON

Stratton's War

Laura Wilson (2008)



In the summer of 1940, the body of silent-movie star Mabel Morgan is found impaled on railings beneath her flat in London's Fitzrovia. The coroner decides it is

suicide but DI Ted Stratton is not so sure. His investigations lead him into a world of Soho gangs and wartime spy rings, and unearth some truths which are uncomfortably close to home. The first of Laura Wilson's 'Stratton' novels is a stylish and well-written thriller.

A Commonplace Killing

Siân Busby (2014)

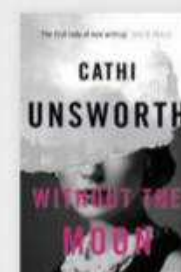


London in the aftermath of the Second World War is brilliantly evoked in this atmospheric crime novel which opens with the discovery of a

woman's body amid bombed-out ruins. DI Jim Cooper makes his way slowly but doggedly towards the truth about the body found on his patch while we, the readers, learn more of what led the woman to her fate. The reality behind this supposedly commonplace killing is movingly revealed.

Without the Moon

Cathi Unsworth (2016)



Based on the real-life series of 'Blackout Ripper' killings in 1942, Unsworth's noir novel summons up the hidden underworlds of wartime London, where prostitutes and

pimps rub shoulders with spivs and soldiers, in rich, convincing detail. DCI Edward Greenaway, once of the Flying Squad, is more used to the world of organised crime than he is to the seemingly random brutality of the serial killer. Nevertheless, he is determined to bring his man to justice.



President Woodrow Wilson is depicted as a hen guarding his egg, the League of Nations, in a cartoon from c1919

Ellie Cawthorne previews the pick of upcoming programmes

TV & RADIO



Peacekeepers

The Dream of World Government

RADIO Radio 4

Saturday 8 September

As the world stood in ruins at the conclusion of the First World War, an idealistic proposal was put forward – for a new world order that would work together to maintain peace and prevent another global conflict.

With hindsight, the formation of the League of Nations in 1920 may seem naively utopian – it failed to dampen the flames when world war reignited just two decades later. However, is it fair to dismiss the project as always doomed to fail? Former foreign secretary David Miliband investigates whether a system of collaborative world government could ever overcome national agendas.



David Lloyd George's 1918 election campaign features in *Home Front*

War stories

Home Front

RADIO Radio 4 from 24 September

Over the course of the past four years (and 556 episodes), Radio 4's *Home Front* has been telling stories of life in Britain during the First World War. After countless family dramas, personal struggles and tales of communities in crisis, the mammoth serialised drama is now heading into its final season.

As usual, the storylines are inspired by real events in the final months of the war; there's a scuttled troopship, gruelling fuel rationing and an upcoming general election. As the clock finally ticks down towards armistice day, the vast cast of characters prepare for life in peacetime.

Fear and fever

Documentary-maker Andrew Thompson explains why the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic holds lessons for today

Pandemic

TV BBC Two scheduled for September

One hundred years ago, as Spanish flu spread like wildfire across Britain, Doctor James Niven jumped into action. While Britain's government remained reticent to deal with the threat head on, Niven tirelessly distributed public health leaflets across Manchester and campaigned for the closure of the city's businesses and schools.

Niven's story is just one of many featured in *Pandemic*, a new BBC documentary that brings the 1918–19 outbreak to life through the eyes of those who experienced it first-hand.

Through his forward-thinking use of preventative measures, "Niven probably saved more lives than anyone else in the UK", says Andrew Thompson, the programme's director and producer, "but he was fighting a losing battle". Whitehall memoranda to prevent the spread of infection were shelved as they were deemed to threaten the war effort, while after the disruption of the conflict, people were keen to return to their normal routines, unencumbered by inconvenient public health precautions.

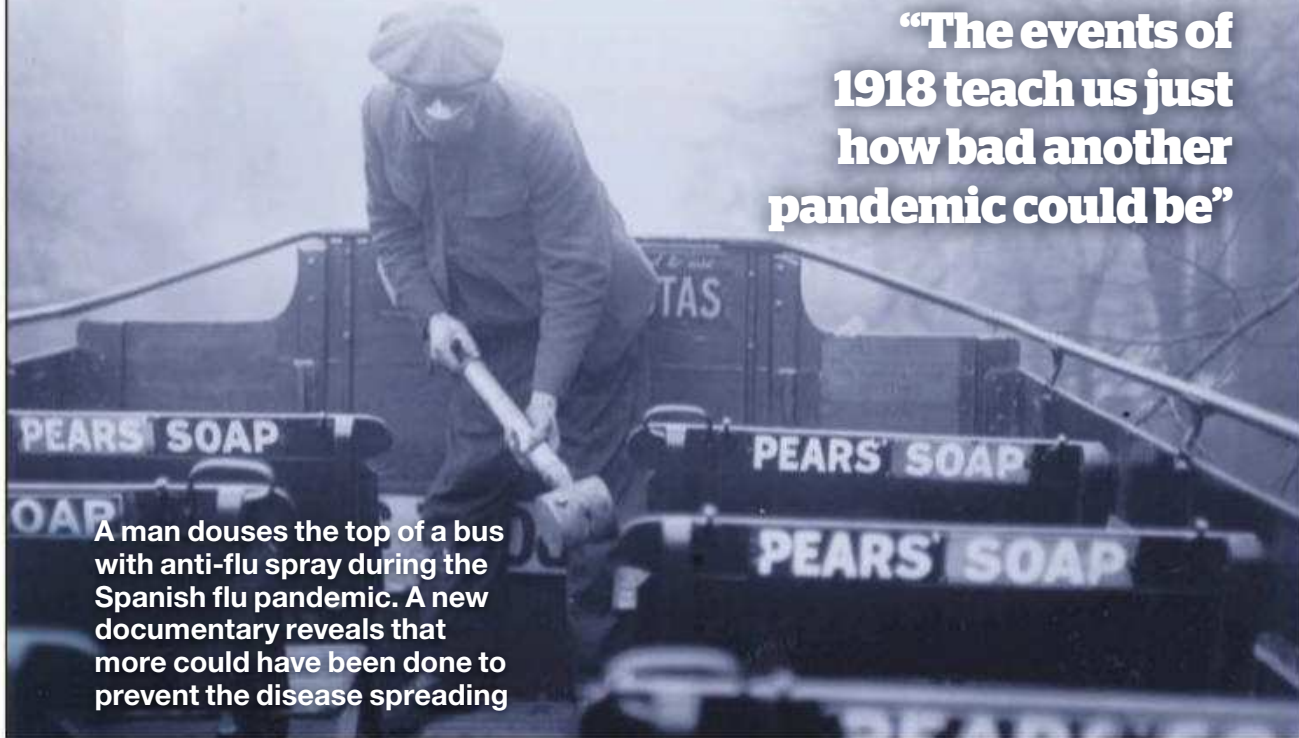
By the time the Spanish flu had finally subsided, the estimated global death toll

stood at 100 million – more than both world wars combined. Yet despite this staggering statistic, Thompson argues that the catastrophic event is often forgotten in narratives of the 20th century. "It's an enormously important moment in history, but it's somewhat under-reported, probably because it was overshadowed by the First World War," he says.

And 100 years on, the story is just as important as ever. According to Thompson, the show is "not just another history lesson. Understanding what happened back in 1918 is of direct relevance for surviving a future pandemic. Speaking to virologists, it becomes very clear that there will be another one sooner or later, and the events of 1918 teach us just how bad it could be." It's an ominous thought, but one that clearly made an impression on the programme makers. "Talking to the experts was surprisingly scary," Thompson recalls. "By the end of the film, all the crew felt like going out to make our last will and testaments."

Pandemic is part of a wider series of BBC programmes looking back on the Spanish flu. On Radio 4, *The Last Enemy* (September) shares more stories of those caught up in the outbreak. **H**

"The events of 1918 teach us just how bad another pandemic could be"



A man douses the top of a bus with anti-flu spray during the Spanish flu pandemic. A new documentary reveals that more could have been done to prevent the disease spreading



The work of writer Edith Wharton – winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1921 – is one of the subjects up for discussion in the latest series of *In Our Time*

Curiosity through the ages

In Our Time

RADIO Radio 4

from Thursday 13 September

Ranging from prehistory to the space landings, and touching on pretty much everything in between, *In Our Time* has been wandering freely through a vast spectrum of subjects for the past two decades. As the show approaches its 20th anniversary this October, a typically diverse batch of subjects are being placed under the microscope.

Melvyn Bragg – joined as always by expert guests – kicks off the series with a look at Homer's *Iliad*. He then

fast-forwards a few thousand years to focus on the biography and beliefs of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. A Christian theologian who spoke out against the Nazi regime, Bonhoeffer was executed for his involvement in a plot to bring down Hitler. Another figure up for discussion is author Edith Wharton, whose realistic portrayals of high society in the late 19th century saw her win the Pulitzer Prize in 1921.

Later in the series, Bragg interrogates Shakespeare's histories to ask: should we consider the Bard's plays as historical commentary, or simply enjoy them as pure drama?

Flying aces

Battle of Britain: Model Squadron

TV Channel 4

starts Sunday 9 September

In this ambitious new experiment, the skies over Britain's south coast are filled with the roars of Messerschmitts and Spitfires. However, this is aerial warfare with a difference – the planes going head to head have empty cockpits, and wingspans of less than five feet.

A hundred years on from the birth of the RAF, the UK and Germany's most enthusiastic model airplane pilots have joined forces to recreate one of the air force's toughest

challenges – the Battle of Britain. Fought between July and September 1940, the battle to control Britain's skies was, of course, a key moment in the Second World War.

Over three episodes, military historian James Holland guides us through three key encounters that shaped the course of the battle. Recreating these fateful dogfights, the model pilots take on hair-raising manoeuvres to uncover the tactics and strategies involved in achieving aerial dominance.

Of course, the stakes will never be as high as in 1940. But it's certainly an inventive way to remember the skill and courage of those who flew in some of history's most dramatic aerial battles.



British and German model airplane pilots join forces in *Battle of Britain: Model Squadron*

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Istanbul's Hagia Sophia is explored in *Ancient Invisible Cities*

In 1975, Britain and Iceland came to blows for a third time over fishing rights in the Atlantic. By the time the dispute was over, Britain had conceded 200 nautical miles of territory, accelerating the decline of the nation's fishing industry. In **The Cod Wars Revisited** (Radio 4, Saturday 29 September) Julia Langdon recounts events and considers the lessons to be learnt.

In **Ancient Invisible Cities** (BBC Two, from Friday 7 September), Dr Michael Scott heads off to Cairo, Athens and Istanbul to uncover what underground laser-scanning can reveal about the cities' unseen architectural secrets. Scott explores an ancient Egyptian pyramid, investigates the Hagia Sophia and discovers how silver mines fuelled economic growth in ancient Greece. (See our feature on page 54).

Also on BBC Two, the two-part series **Princess Margaret: Royal Rebel** (starts Tuesday 11 September) reflects on what the roller-coaster life of the queen's sister tells us about changing social attitudes in Britain. (Read more on page 46).

Over on PBS America, **Far From Home** (from Thursday 13 September) documents key moments in the Canadian experience of the First World War. Episodes in September look at the country's entry into the war and the battle of Vimy Ridge. Meanwhile, **Men at Lunch** (Friday 7 September) investigates the history behind the iconic photograph of workers enjoying a sandwich on a steel beam high above the Manhattan skyline. It's a story of the Great Depression, immigration and New York's dizzying urban boom.

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HISTORY EXPLORER

Muslim worship in Britain

Nige Tassell and Professor Sophie Gilliat-Ray explore the **Shah Jahan Mosque** in Woking, Britain's first-ever purpose-built mosque, which turns 130 years old next year

Despite being flanked by both road and rail, it's easy to miss the Shah Jahan Mosque if you're not looking out for it. The eagle-eyed, either in their car or aboard a train, may catch a fleeting glimpse of its striking emerald-green dome, but such a glimpse is insufficient. A building of such beauty and majesty deserves lengthy admiration from the closest of quarters.

Its comparative invisibility notwithstanding, the Shah Jahan Mosque has been one of the key landmarks in Woking since its construction in 1889. Located on Oriental Road, its presence in the identity of the leafy Surrey commuter town has since become a permanent fixture. It's part of the local fabric. Indeed, the mother of perhaps Woking's most famous son, singer Paul Weller, used to be the mosque's cleaner.

Not that Woking had been an obvious place in which to construct Britain's first purpose-built mosque. At the time of its completion, the town had no Muslim population. Most Muslims living in the UK in the late Victorian era, and usually temporarily at that, were lascars (foreign

sailors employed by British shipping companies). Landlocked Woking would hardly have been a port of call.

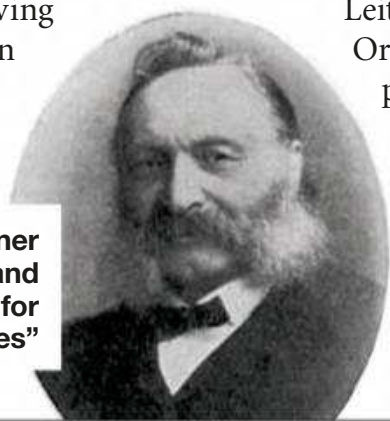
Accordingly, it's unsurprising to learn that the first mosque to open its doors in Britain, a handful of months before the Shah Jahan Mosque did so, was in a port city. A solicitor in Liverpool called William Quilliam, who changed his name to Abdullah Quilliam when he converted to Islam from Methodism, turned a terraced house into a place for Islamic worship.

Studying the Islamic world

Woking's lack of Muslim residents did not deter the man behind the building of the Shah Jahan Mosque, though. Dr Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner was a Hungarian-born Jew with a vision of establishing an educational institution in Europe at which Islam and the Islamic world could be studied. While London would have been the more sensible location, the price of property sent him out of the city to Woking. The buildings and grounds of the defunct Royal Dramatic College were not only up for sale, but they could be bought cheap.

Leitner's plans for what became the Oriental Institute were double-pronged, explains Sophie Gilliat-Ray, professor in religious and theological studies at Cardiff University. "The aim was to orientate those Indians coming to Europe for study, and likewise

Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner was "entrepreneurial and energetic, remarkable for his linguistic capacities"

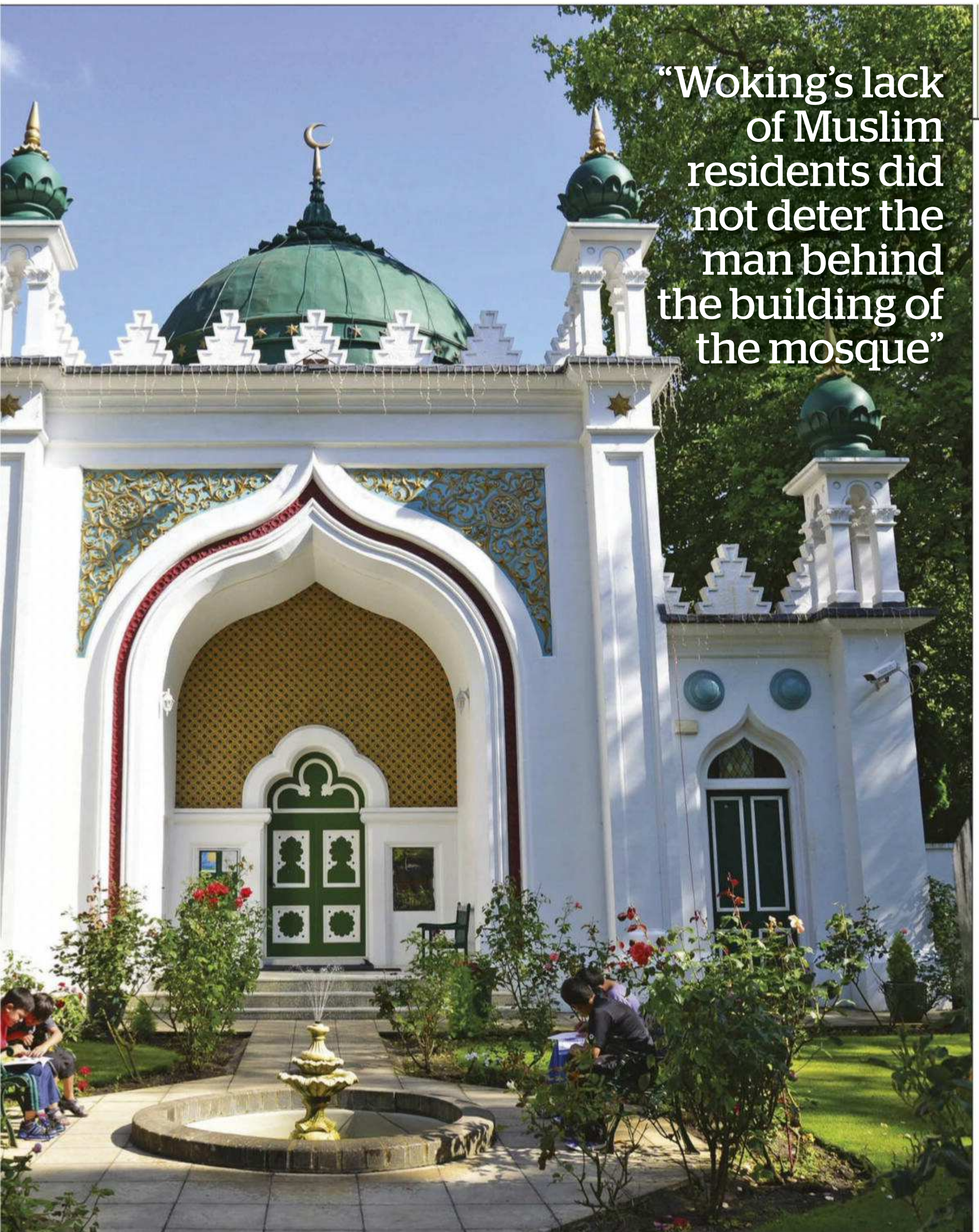


The Shah Jahan Mosque was saved from developers and renovated from 1913 by Kashmiri lawyer Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, who also founded the Woking Muslim Mission



TOP/OTO/ALAMY

“Woking’s lack
of Muslim
residents did
not deter the
man behind
the building of
the mosque”





Two men pray at Woking's Shah Jahan Mosque which, earlier this year, became the first Grade I-listed mosque in Britain

help European scholars to learn Indian languages prior to their travels in the Indian subcontinent. The mosque was built within the College grounds and served Muslim students, as well as students from London. Other notable worshippers included the Muslim staff serving in Queen Victoria's household in Windsor.

"Leitner was an entrepreneurial and energetic individual, remarkable for his linguistic and intellectual capacities, both in terms of breadth and depth. He spent an extensive period in what is now Pakistan and was appointed as Registrar of the University of the Punjab in Lahore in 1882. But there is no record of him ever converting to Islam."

Up in Liverpool, a man who had taken the Islamic faith, Abdullah Quilliam, reflected on how the local community saw him. "When I first renounced Christianity and embraced Islam," he wrote in 1890, "I found that I was looked upon as a species of monomaniac, and if I endeavoured to induce people to discuss the respective merits of the two religions, I was either laughed at or insulted."

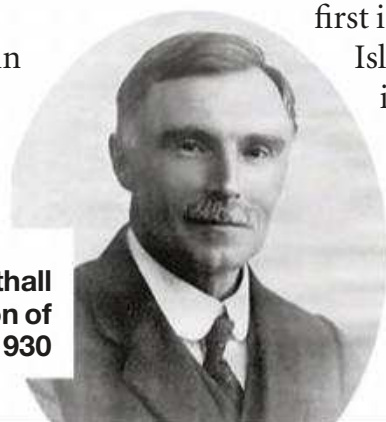
Despite the reaction to Quilliam, he was far from an anomaly. A notable number among the indigenous British population were fascinated by Islam and its teachings. After Leitner's death in 1899, the Shah Jahan Mosque closed for a number of years, before being revived and

reopened in 1913. By then, certain figures from the British establishment had also converted, such as Lord Headley and Marmaduke Pickthall. Both made significant contributions to the evolution of Islam on these shores. Headley, under his adopted name of Shaikh Rahmatullah al-Farooq, established the British Muslim Society, while novelist (and vicar's son) Pickthall translated the Qur'an into English and was the editor of the *Islamic Review*, published from the mosque in Woking.

"These high-profile converts seemed to be attracted to Islam on account of its doctrinal teachings and its ethical, egalitarian principles," explains Gilliat-Ray. "The development of scientific knowledge in the 19th and early 20th centuries offered less of a challenge to Islamic beliefs than to Christian ones. Indeed, for Abdullah Quilliam, the teachings of the Qur'an positively supported scientific discoveries. Some of these high-profile converts turned to Islam as a reaction to the power, privilege, disunity and political conservatism of some of the Christian churches."

Migration and settlement

Yet these conversions did not signify the first interaction between Britain and Islam. "Muslims initially arrived in significant numbers as transient seafarers as part of the colonial shipping industry of the 19th and 20th century. Few were permanent settlers, but resided in boarding houses in the maritime ports



Scholar Marmaduke Pickthall published his translation of the Qur'an into English in 1930

THE LARGEST WAVE OF MUSLIM IMMIGRATION OCCURRED WHEN THE COUNTRY WAS IN NEED OF REBUILDING, BOTH PHYSICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY



Indian soldiers fighting for the British Army in the Second World War drink tea outside the Shah Jahan Mosque in November 1941

of Liverpool, London, Tyneside and Cardiff," asserts Gilliat-Ray. "These boarding houses often became a locus for later Muslim community development. Their location in and around dockland areas, and the fact that seafarers were coming and going with the arrival and departure of ships, meant that there was relatively little engagement with the wider population."

If Muslim manpower was required to secure Britain's colonial trading dominance, it also proved vital in less peaceful times. Gilliat-Ray says: "During the 20th century, Muslims from various parts of the British empire were crucial in both the First and Second World War efforts. Muslims worked in armaments factories, as well as on the

GETTY/ALAMY

VISIT

Shah Jahan Mosque



Oriental Road, Woking, Surrey GU22 7BA

● shahjahanmosque.org.uk

battlefield. During the Second World War, the Indian army, which included large numbers of Muslim soldiers, constituted the largest voluntary army. Their bravery was recognised via the conferring of military awards, but for the vast majority, especially those lost at sea, there was little recognition of their contribution.”

The largest wave of Muslim immigration to Britain occurred following the Second World War, when the country was in need of rebuilding, both physically and economically. By then, Muslim migration had moved inland, away from the ports and into the industrialised cities.

“There was a need for semi-skilled and unskilled labour to work in British factories, textile mills and in public services,” explains Gilliat-Ray. “Many young single men came to Britain from the Indian subcontinent as economic migrants in the 1960s and 1970s. They intended to eventually return ‘back home’, taking their savings with them. However, legislative changes, among other things, led to the arrival of

women and children to join their husbands and fathers in the UK, which led to a shift from temporary male residence to more permanent family settlement.”

The demographic make-up of Woking certainly followed this pattern, thanks to the easy availability of work in manufacturing industries during the postwar years, almost certainly coupled with the magnetic draw of the Shah Jahan Mosque. From that non-existent presence at the time of the mosque’s construction, the town currently boasts a Muslim population of around 10,000, the highest of any town in Surrey.

Muslim influence in Britain

It’s understandable for the common perception to be that Muslims only settled in this country in large numbers during the postwar decades, as the longer story remains noticeably hidden and untold. “The history of engagement between the British Isles and the Muslim world stretches back over many centuries, but few people are aware of this history,” says Gilliat-Ray. “Similarly, few people recognise the cultural, scientific, mathematical and linguistic contribution of the Muslim world. Take our vocabulary, for example. So many words in common usage today stem from the Arabic, such as al-jabr (algebra), qahwa (coffee) and sukkar (sugar).”

More so than ever, our times dictate that a stronger understanding of the Muslim world is required and the, now Grade I-listed, Shah Jahan Mosque is the perfect crucible in which the public perception of Islam can itself be renovated.

On this warm August afternoon, it remains an oasis of calm and peace. Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner might not have envisaged the constant stream of cars along Oriental Road, nor the retail park that now occupies the eastern side of the original site. But were he alive today, he would approve of the number of worshippers still using the mosque and its more recently added extended prayer halls. Radiant in the bright sunlight, this architectural gem looks more magnificent than ever. **H**



Sophie Gilliat-Ray is professor in religious and theological studies at Cardiff University, and the founding director of the Islam-UK Centre. She is author of *Muslims in Britain: An Introduction* (CUP, 2010). Words: Nige Tassell

ISLAM IN BRITAIN FOUR MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE

1 Abdullah Quilliam Mosque

LIVERPOOL

Where Britain got its first mosque

Liverpudlian solicitor William Quilliam converted to Islam in 1887, changed his name to Abdullah Quilliam and turned a terraced house in the city into Britain’s first mosque. It predated the Shah Jahan Mosque, the first purpose-built mosque, by a handful of months.

● abdullahquilliam.org

2 Aziziye Mosque

STOKE NEWINGTON, LONDON

Where films gave way to worship

This building in north-east London was the Astra Cinema, famous for showing kung-fu movies, but its conversion into a mosque commenced in the early 1980s, funded by the UK Turkish Islamic Association. Its past as a picture house is still discernible in its façade.

● aziziye.org.uk



Aziziye Mosque was once a cinema

3 Ghamkol Sharif Mosque

BIRMINGHAM

Where thousands can worship

Located on a main arterial route out of the city, this mosque, built in the 1990s, is an extremely striking building. While the architecture lacks the delicate lines of the Shah Jahan Mosque, its significance is in its scale as it can accommodate 5,000 worshippers at any one time across three floors.

● ghamkolsharif.org

4 Glasgow Central Mosque

GLASGOW

Where Scotland got its first mosque

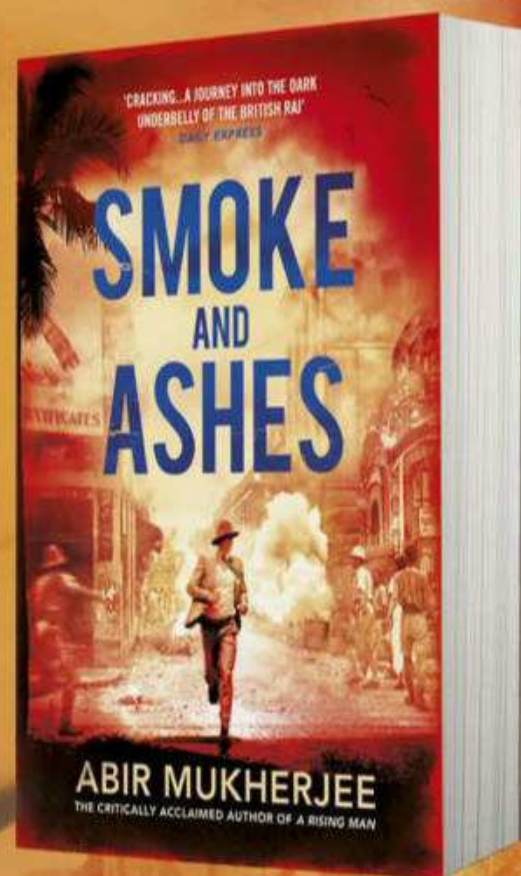
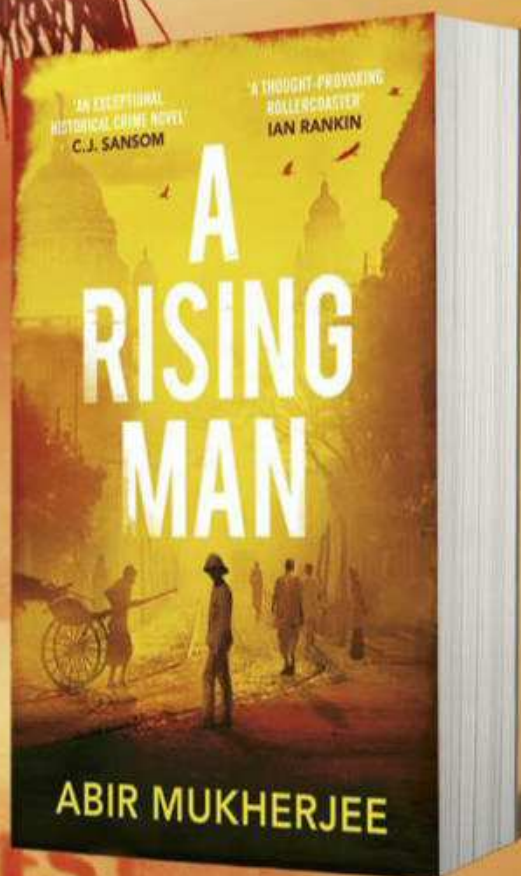
Built to represent Muslims in Scotland’s largest city, Glasgow Central Mosque is found in the Gorbals district on the southern bank of the river Clyde. It was the first purpose-built mosque north of the border, opened in 1984. Guided tours are offered.

● centralmosque.co.uk



ALAMY Asian workers at a Blackburn factory in 1983, at a time when Muslim immigration into the UK had increased significantly

JOURNEY INTO THE DARK UNDERBELLY OF THE BRITISH RAJ...



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Exploring the world

GALLERY OPENINGS / FREE ENTRY

New galleries

National Maritime Museum, Greenwich

From 20 September

☎ 020 8858 4422

● rmg.co.uk/whats-on/four-new-galleries



With the completion of a £12.6m redevelopment project, more than 1,100 historical objects have now gone on display across four new galleries at the National Maritime Museum.

Between them, the galleries examine British and European exploration from the late 15th century through to the present day, highlighting, among other things, Britain's relationship with the sea and its long role as a maritime power.

The Tudor and Stuart Seafarers gallery uses 120 objects – such as astrolabes, compasses and telescopes – to illustrate how England emerged as a maritime nation between 1500 and 1700. The Pacific Encounters gallery continues this story by examining how European travellers turned their attention to the Pacific Ocean in the 17th century. Voyages such as that by HMS *Endeavour* (1768–71), the first of the three Pacific expeditions led by Captain James Cook, will be explored.

British endeavours in the Arctic and Antarctic are the theme of the Polar Worlds gallery, which examines the major polar expeditions of the past 250 years. Meanwhile the final space, Sea Things, will explore how the British identity has been shaped by the sea, with 600 objects on show, many on open display.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: **Astronomical compendium dial, 1569;**
The Kongouro [kangaroo] from New Holland by George Stubbs, 1772;
Endurance trapped in ice, 1912; statuette of Grace Darling, 1838

EXHIBITION

Making Connections - Stonehenge in its Prehistoric World

Stonehenge, near
Amesbury, Wiltshire
12 October–21 April 2019

☎ 0370 333 1181

● english-heritage.org.uk

Displays of Neolithic and Bronze Age objects help uncover the prehistoric connections between the British Isles and continental Europe in this exhibition, which forms part of the celebrations to mark the centenary of Stonehenge being given to the nation.



EXHIBITION

Spanish Flu: Nursing During History's Deadliest Pandemic

Florence Nightingale
Museum, London
21 September–16 June 2019

● florence-nightingale.co.uk

Marking 100 years since the outbreak of Spanish Flu, this exhibition explores both the spread of the illness and its impact on everyday life. The experiences of volunteer and professional nurses, many of whom were still treating the wounded of the First World War, will also be examined, along with some unusual treatments and remedies.

A 4,000-year-old gold crescent necklace, or lunula, from Ireland

EVENT

Museums at Night

UK-wide
25–27 October

● museumsatnight.org.uk

Museums, art galleries libraries, archives and a host of historical locations around the UK will keep their doors open after dark for the biannual festival of late-night events. Experiences include candlelight tours, museum sleepovers, interactive workshops, historical talks, theatre performances and, as it's Halloween, spooky events for younger visitors. The event is produced by Culture24 – visit the website to see what's taking place near you.

EVENT

BBC History Magazine's History Weekend

Various locations,
Winchester, Hampshire
5–7 October

☎ 0871 620 4021

● historyextra.com/winchester

BBC History Magazine's annual history weekend returns to Winchester for its third year in October, with talks on a range of topics, from the Tudors to Winston Churchill. Speakers include Lucy Worsley, Alison Weir, Bernard Cornwell, Suzannah Lipscomb and Michael Wood. Turn to page 64 for a full list of speakers and information on how to book tickets.

MY FAVOURITE PLACE

Vienna, Austria



by Nigel Jones

The latest in our historical holiday series sees Nigel explore the rich artistic and intellectual history of the Austrian capital

I view Vienna not through a visitor's eyes, but those of a former resident. I spent four years there as a journalist in the 1990s, have a Viennese son, and often revisit the city. Therefore, if not exactly my favourite place, I certainly know Vienna well enough to pronounce it near the top of European cities for its quality of life, its culture and, of course, its history!

Vienna today gives the impression that history has passed it by since c1900, when it was the most vibrant cultural and political centre in Europe. It was home then to such varied personalities as psychologists Sigmund Freud and Alfred

Adler, composer and conductor Gustav Mahler and his wife Alma, Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky, artists Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele and, for Vienna's history is shadowed by its dark side, a young vagrant named Adolf Hitler.

Those days have long gone, but if you take a tram or horse-drawn Fiaker ride around the Ringstrasse, which circles the city's historical heart, the First District, you will still see the ghosts of its great imperial past in the shape of imposing buildings like the Hofburg. Once the palace home of the Habsburg dynasty, it now houses the crown jewels, the national library and the famous white

horses of the Spanish Riding School. Then there is the Opera House, the sweeping parliament building, the Burg (Court) theatre, and opposite, the huge Rathaus, or city hall, a bastion of the Social Democrats, who long dominated the city, making Vienna a progressive island in a conservative Austrian sea.

These grandiose structures attest to Vienna's role as capital of the Austro-Hungarian empire of 100 million people, a multi-ethnic patchwork quilt torn apart a century ago at the end of the First World War. Since then, the city, with the exception of its Nazi years, has been capital of the truncated Austrian republic – with a population today of around 10 million people – and has largely lived on its past glories.

But what glories they were! A visit to the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Austria's national art gallery, reveals a wealth of genius – Bruegel, Velazquez, Raphael, – from when the Habsburgs ruled almost half of Europe. Or take a U-bahn out to the city's leafy western suburbs, where the butter-coloured Schönbrunn, the Habsburg summer palace, lies in its vast park (which also contains Vienna's Zoo) and see where Napoleon lived after conquering the city.

Vienna's magnificent city hall, built between 1872 and 1883, can be found in the heart of the city

Austria's pre-eminent art, naturally, is music. Vienna has been home to most of Europe's greatest maestros, from Haydn and Mozart, to Beethoven, Schubert, Strauss, Brahms and Bruckner, down to the atonal music of Schönberg. Following his death in 1791, Mozart was interred in a communal grave in the St Marx cemetery.

If you go to the suburb of Heiligenstadt you can sip fresh local wine and nibble meaty morsels in a Heurigen (restaurant) in one of the innumerable houses where the cash-strapped Beethoven had lodgings.

Food and drink are as much an intrinsic part of Viennese culture as music. If Wiener-schnitzel (veal in eggs and breadcrumbs) or Goulasch soup are not to your taste, then how



The car in which Archduke Franz Ferdinand was travelling when he was shot in 1914, on show at Vienna's Museum of Military History





“Vienna was once the most vibrant cultural and political centre in Europe

ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

BEST TIME TO GO

All year round, really. Vienna can be sultry in summer, but its many parks and spa pools offer a refreshing escape. Many people choose to visit in winter, when Christmas markets abound. Autumn and spring are also delightful times to visit.

GETTING THERE

Vienna has superb transport links by road, rail and air. The city's international airport is a two-hour flight from London, and non-stop trains, scheduled every half hour, will get you to the city centre in just 20 minutes. Purchase a tourist ticket at the airport for unlimited city transport by trams, U-bahn or bus.

WHAT TO PACK

Comfortable walking shoes, a German language phrase book (though most people speak English), and a couple of the many excellent histories of Austria and Vienna available in English.

WHAT TO BRING BACK

Leberkuchen biscuits and, if you dare wear them back home, traditional Austrian clothes: dirndl dresses for women, lederhosen for men. They are expensive, but last a lifetime.

READER VIEWS

Walk up the Kahlenberg just outside Vienna and see the city from the same place that 3,000 Polish hussars did in 1683! @morphashark

about an Apfelstrudel or a Sachertorte cake with Schlag-sahne (whipped cream)?

Vienna's crowning culinary jewel has to be the coffee house. Legend has it that the city was once the portal for the arrival of coffee in Europe, when the Viennese discovered sacks of beans in abandoned Turkish tents after an unsuccessful Ottoman siege of the city in 1683. Its legacy lies in languid cafes like the Central, the Pruckel and the Landtmann, (Freud's favourite) that litter the city. Here you can linger for hours over a Grosser Brauner (double espresso), or Melange

(an espresso with steamed milk), read newspapers, or just gossip with friends.

For active pursuits there is the Prater, a huge park given to the Viennese for leisure purposes by Emperor Josef II in the 18th century. The Prater contains one of the world's oldest funfairs, which is famous for being the backdrop to Orson Welles's line about cuckoo clocks in the 1949 film *The Third Man*.

Though proud of its past, Vienna has made sterling efforts to keep up with modern times: building the Donaustadt quarter on the banks of the not-so-blue Danube to house international agencies like the UN and Opec, and in the Museums Quarter showcasing galleries presenting contemporary art. For me, however, it will always be a place of the past.

On a sleepy afternoon last year, I visited Vienna's Military History Museum, the prize exhibits of which are the bloodstained sky blue uniform worn by Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo on 28 June 1914, and the car he and his wife rode in on that fatal day. A neat round bullet hole punctures the car door. The shot that started a world war: you can't get much closer to history than that. **H**

Nigel Jones is author of eight historical books. He co-founded and leads tours for the travel company historicaltrips.com

Read more of Nigel's experiences in Vienna at historyextra.com/vienna

Next month: Meleisa Ono-George explores the Caribbean island of Jamaica



Been there...

Have you visited **Vienna**? Do you have a top tip for readers? Contact us via Twitter or Facebook

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whitwellstation.com

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rhdr.org.uk

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bodminrailway.co.uk

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Historic DAYS OUT

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015394 35544 // wordsworth.org.uk



Museum of the Jewellery Quarter

When the owners of the Smith and Pepper jewellery factory decided to retire after 80 years of trading, they simply locked the doors and left behind a time capsule for future generations. Today the factory is a remarkable museum in Birmingham's famous Jewellery Quarter, where you can enjoy guided tours and demonstrations of traditional jewellery making.

0121 348 8140 // birminghammuseums.org.uk/jewellery



St Albans Museum + Gallery

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01727 864 511 // stalban museums.org.uk



The Bowes Museum

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01833 690606 // info@thebowesmuseum.org.uk



Sizergh, National Trust

Standing proud at the gateway to the Lake District, Sizergh is waiting to be explored throughout autumn. 'Sizergh Uncovered' (Tuesday 25 – Sunday 30 September) gives visitors a sneak-peek at items not usually on display whilst 'Cecilia: A Life in Letters' (until 31 October) tells Sizergh's story through the words of its eighteenth-century mistress.

0344 800 1895 // nationaltrust.org.uk/sizergh



Hever Castle & Gardens

Children can take part in a series of hands-on activities to learn to be a knight or princess in medieval times. Explore different periods in history with encampments, re-enactments and stalls over the bank holiday.

01732 865224 // www.hevercastle.co.uk

Autumn Heritage Collection



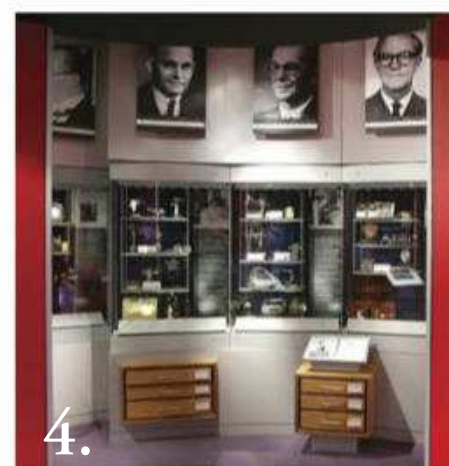
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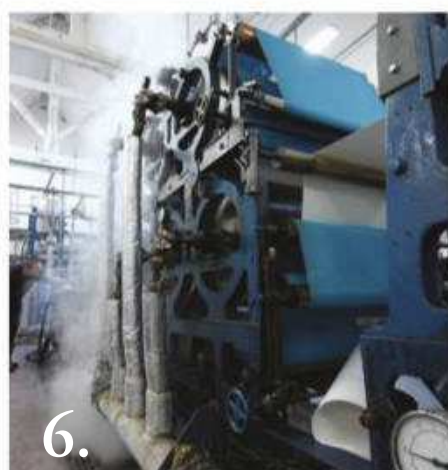
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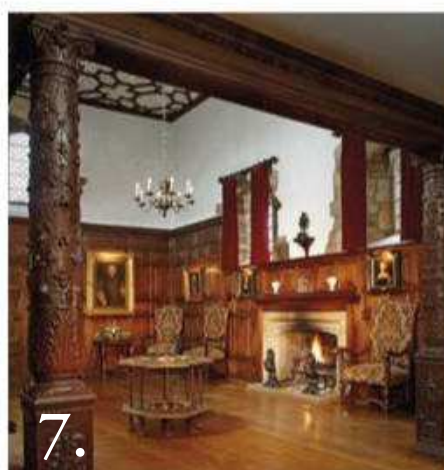
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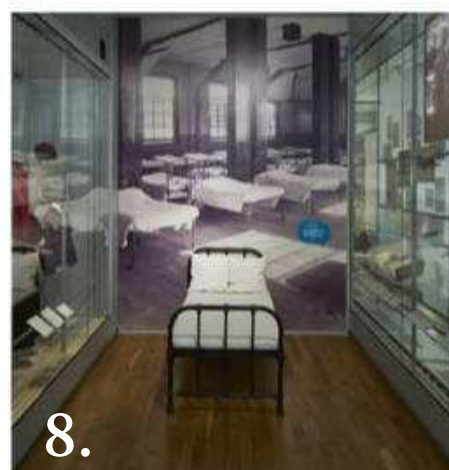
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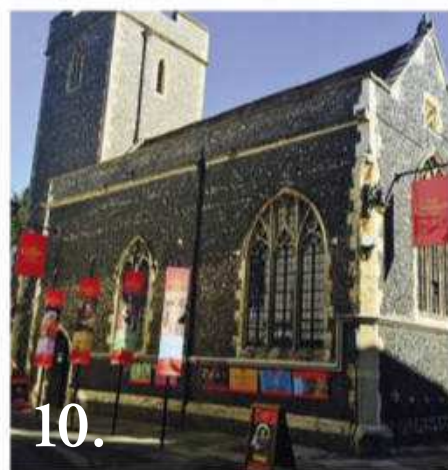
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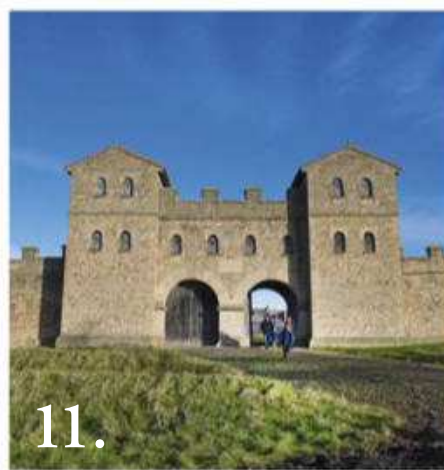
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1. BENTLEY PRIORY MUSEUM

Join us in commemorating Battle of Britain day on the 15th September 2018 with interactive activities, historical stalls and pop-up talks throughout the day. Pre-booked tickets required, available from 23rd July.

bentleypriorymuseum.org.uk | 020 8950 5526

2. NATIONAL TRUST CALKE ABBEY

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nationaltrust.org.uk/calke | 01332 863 822

3. LIBRARY AND MUSEUM OF FREEMASONRY

Explore 300 years of masonic history at the home of English freemasonry, located in the heart of London. A new exhibition *Bejewelled: Badges, Brotherhood and Identity* opens 20 September. Admission is free.

freemasonry.london.museum | 02073 959 257

4. ANAESTHESIA HERITAGE CENTRE

Our new exhibition on display from November 2018 will showcase objects relating to the muscle relaxant curare; an Amazonian poison which revolutionised the practice of anaesthesia.

heritage@aagbi.org | 02076 311 650

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merchantsallyork.org

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thepapertrail.org.uk | 01442 234 600

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hevercastle.co.uk | 01732 865224

8. THE FOUNDLING MUSEUM

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foundlingmuseum.org.uk | 020 7841 3600

9. DERBY MUSEUMS

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derbymuseums.org | 01332 641 901

10. CANTERBURY TALES

Explore the sights, sounds and smells of medieval England in this unique experience. Join our costumed guides and revel in the recreated scenes as Chaucer's tales are brought vividly to life.

info@canterburytales.org.uk | 01227 696002

11. ARBEIA, SOUTH SHIELDS ROMAN FORT

A World Heritage Site, Arbeia has the finest Roman full scale reconstructions in the UK with significant artefacts from Roman Britain including the Regina Tombstone.

arbeiaromanfort.org.uk | 01912 771 410

12. READING ABBEY QUARTER

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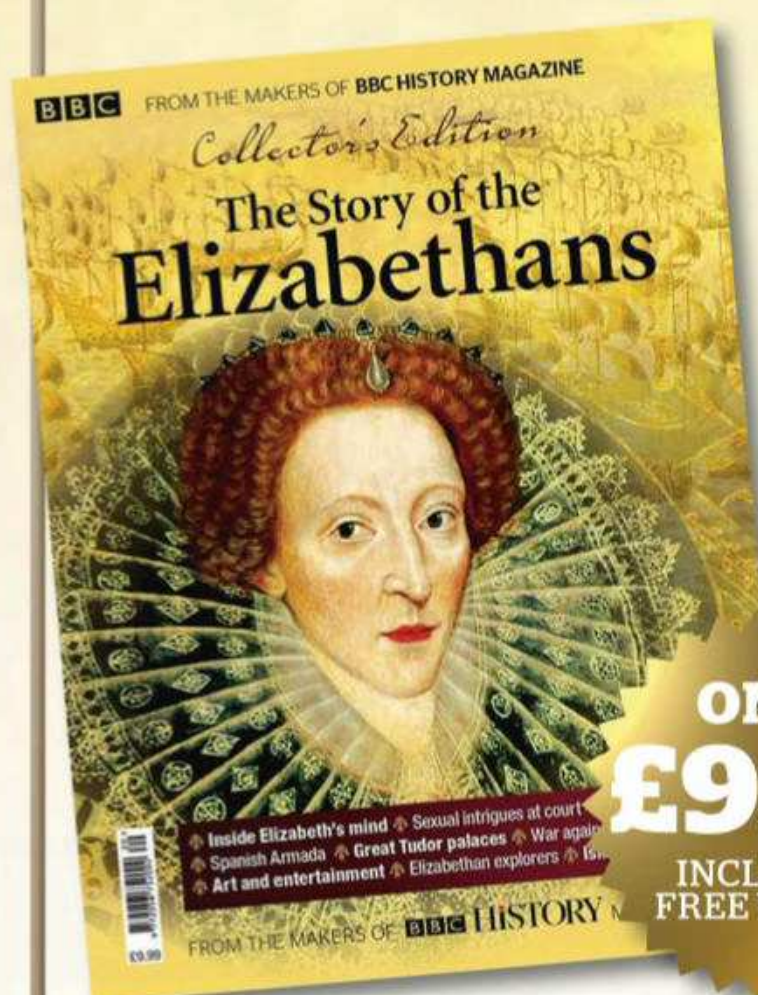
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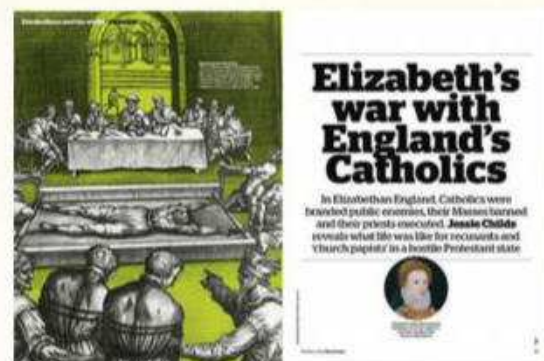
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QUIZ

BY JULIAN HUMPHRYS

Try your hand at this month's history quiz

ONLINE
QUIZZES
historyextra.com
/quiz

1. With which major archaeological discovery would you associate Edith Pretty and Basil Brown?

2. Which English head of state is buried in Hursley in Hampshire?

3. Who behaved "impeccably" at Queen Victoria's deathbed?

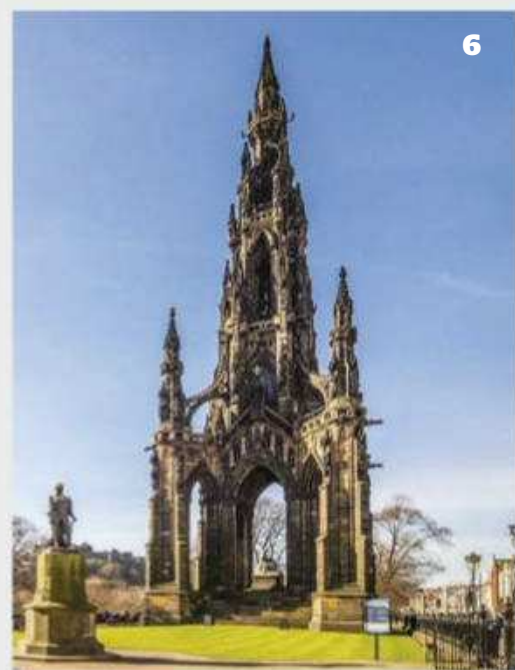
4. Which poet enlisted in the British Army under the name Silas Tomkyn Comberbatche?

5. Which women's political organisation first met in July 1908 with Lady Jersey in the chair?

6. Where is this, who does it commemorate and how did George Kemp, its designer, meet his death?



3



6

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. The Anglo-Saxon burials at Sutton Hoo.
2. Richard Cromwell.
3. Kaiser Wilhelm II.
4. Samuel Taylor Coleridge.
5. The Women's National Anti-Suffrage League.
6. Edinburgh. Sir Walter Scott. Kemp fell in the Union Canal and drowned.

GOT A QUESTION?

Write to *BBC History Magazine*, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN. Email: historymagazine@historyextra.com or submit via our website: historyextra.com



ILLUSTRATION BY GLEN MCBETH

Q How accurate are the statues we see of famous Roman figures? Did ancient artists even intend their creations to be true to life?

Basil Devenish-Meares, Dorset

A In general, the Romans certainly regarded portrait statues and busts as true to life, and those portraits that pay a lot of attention to individualistic details like wrinkles and facial irregularities are very plausible. Perhaps we should work on the assumption that images of famous Romans were accurate except when there is a good reason to doubt it.

On the other hand, many Roman portraits are highly idealised. For example, the youthful image of the first Roman emperor, Augustus, which owes a lot to the tradition of classical Greek sculpture, continued to be used even when he was in his seventies. There's no doubt that the artists who designed such portraits had an agenda:

they wanted to present as positive an image as possible, sometimes alluding to earlier rulers, so a degree of artifice was involved.

Can ancient descriptions help us? For example, the second-century AD writer Suetonius mentions the appearances of earlier emperors (his account of Augustus is a good deal less flattering than the sculptures). Perhaps, but such authors are not objective either. In ancient thought, physical appearance was linked to character, so even an apparently truthful description is loaded with significance.

Dr Peter Stewart is director of the Classical Art Research Centre and associate professor of classical art and archaeology, Oxford University

SAMANTHA'S RECIPE CORNER



Every issue, picture editor **Samantha Nott** brings you a recipe from the past. This month it's a delightfully simple potato pancake hailing from Ireland

Boxty

A cross between a rosti, a pancake and a hash brown, a boxty is a griddled or fried cake made from potatoes – a staple crop in Ireland since the 18th century. Boxty's name is thought to originate from *arán bocht tí*, the Irish for 'poor house bread'.

Because they are so simple, boxties come in many different shapes and sizes and can be served in all sorts of ways.

They make a perfect hearty side for sausages, or can be made into a tortilla-style wrap and stuffed with fillings. Dip them in apple sauce or drizzle them with maple syrup and load with bacon for a delicious and filling breakfast.

INGREDIENTS

250g raw potatoes, peeled and grated
250g cold mashed potato
200g plain flour
1/2 tsp baking powder
1 tbsp melted butter
Salt and pepper
100ml milk
1 tbsp olive oil

METHOD

Squeeze the raw grated potato in a tea towel to get rid of any excess starch or water.

In a bowl, mix together the grated and mashed potatoes.

Add the flour and melted butter. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Heat the oil in a griddle or non-stick frying pan.

Add the egg and enough milk to make thick batter that will drop from a spoon. Scoop spoonfuls of the boxty batter on to the hot griddle pan one by one. Cook for four minutes on each side or until cooked through and golden brown.

Remove from the pan and leave to drain on kitchen paper before serving warm.

VERDICT

"Buttery, rich and incredibly versatile"

Difficulty: 2/10

Time: 1.5 hours total

Recipe sourced from recipes.wikia.com



A cockerel is commonly used as a device on weather vanes, but why?

Q Why are weather vanes traditionally depicted with a cockerel on top?

O Adamberry, Gibraltar

A Devices to indicate the direction of the wind are quite ancient, emerging independently in places as far apart as Sumer (modern-day southern Iraq) and China.

The first one that we know a lot about was the Tower of the Winds in Athens, in the first century BC. The octagonal marble tower had a bronze figure of Triton pointing a rod at whichever of the eight Greek wind gods was prevailing.

By around the third century AD (and probably sooner) the Chinese had weather vanes in the shape of birds. Perhaps it was because some birds take off into the wind (and others 'hover' by flying into a headwind). Maybe it was just because an ornamental bird seemed an obvious thing to have up in the air on the unobstructed high point needed for accuracy.

In the Mediterranean, there is mention of cockerels on weather vanes as early as AD 200, while the oldest in Italy dates from the early 800s. Various popes are supposed

to have decreed that weather vanes on churches should take cockerel form, and they were common by the early Middle Ages. The 11th-century Bayeux Tapestry even shows a man climbing onto the roof of Westminster Abbey in order to plant a weathercock.

The religious meaning is usually put down to Christ's prediction at the Last Supper that Peter would disown him three times before the cock crowed next morning. It is thus a symbol of God's mercy in that Peter was forgiven after repenting his seemingly unforgiveable betrayal.

Alternatively (or also), the cockerel was a pagan motif, usually of the rising sun or daybreak, which was adopted by Christianity to symbolise the light of the new day and new beginnings.

In purely practical terms, a flat ornamental rooster is a good choice because its big tail easily catches the breeze.

Eugene Byrne is an author and journalist, specialising in history

ALAMY/JENI NOTT

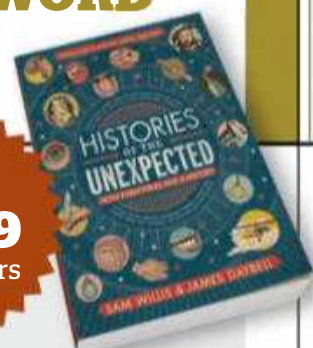
PRIZE CROSSWORD

What was the real name of the man dubbed 'Ironside'? (see 17 down)



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Across

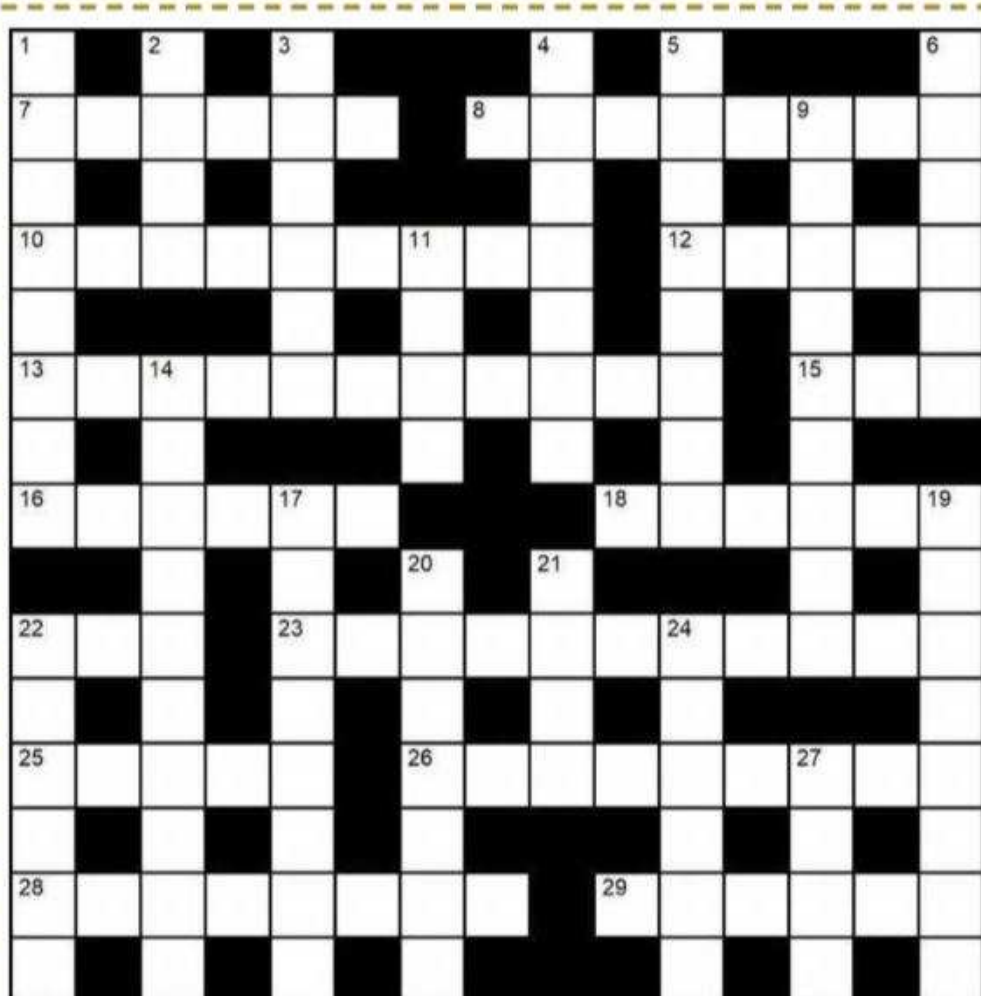
- 7** The ____ Book, written down about 970, is the largest collection of Old English poetry in existence (6)
8 See 2 down
10 As a member of the Gang of Four, she was the most influential woman in the People's Republic of China (5,4)
12 The feudal bond between a man and his overlord (5)
13 The Jamaican nurse who was belatedly honoured for her nursing achievements, particularly during the Crimean War (4,7)
15 Town of the Somme department of France – Joan of Arc and the future Napoleon III were two notable detainees in its fortress (3)
16 Scottish mathematician, John, who originated the system of logarithms in the 17th century (6)
18 Northernmost of Ireland's four traditional provinces (6)
22 A European state from 1949 until 1990 (abbrev) (3)
23 The campaigner who opened Britain's first birth control clinic in 1921 (5,6)
25 Joe, anarchic writer of black comedies, killed by his lover in 1967 (5)
26 Name of the ship, broken by pack ice, used for Shackleton's 1914–16 Antarctic expedition (9)
28 The so-called ____ Revolution that resulted in the accession of William and Mary to the throne (8)
29 Family name of an heiress of a US media empire, kidnapped by leftist radicals in 1974 (6)

Down

- 1** A 20th-century Poet Laureate and defender of Victorian architecture (8)
2/8 British nurse, feminist and pacifist who, in 1933, wrote a bestselling memoir of her First World War experiences (4,8)
3 Prehistoric ritual enclosures (6)
4 A mounted, armed



This social reformer opened Britain's first birth control clinic (see 23 across)



- infantryman: the term survives in the names of certain regiments (7)
5 US army officer, 'Vinegar Joe', who became Chiang Kai-shek's chief of staff (8)
6 Theologian whose 'proof' of God's existence has prompted great debate – he died at Canterbury in 1109 and was made a saint (6)
9 Name of four kings of Egypt (the fourth one became Akhenaten) (9)
11 Name of a number of grand princes of Moscow, the first reigning from around 1328–40 (4)
14 Compensation extracted from eg Germany after the two world wars (10)
17 King of England, nicknamed 'Ironside' because of his staunch resistance to Cnut's invasion (6,2)
19 Gabriel Dante, painter/poet, who helped to found the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (8)
20 The last king of Lydia, defeated by Cyrus the Great (7)
21 US social anthropologist, Margaret – the scientific

- soundness of her book *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928) has been questioned (4)
22 15th-century king of Bohemia and head of the Utraquist faction of the Hussites (6)
24 Country that came into being in 1923 with the official demise of the Ottoman state (6)
27 Roman emperor, the last of the Julio-Claudian line (4)

Compiled by **Eddie James**

SOLUTION TO OUR AUGUST 2018 CROSSWORD

Across: 1 Geraldine 6 Epehy 10 Fisher 11 Waitangi 12 Barnardo 14 U-boat 16 Argonne 19 Chindits 20 Troy 21 Fleet 23 Stannary 25 Montcalm 27 Scarpe 28 Kant 29 Iron Guard. **Down:** 2 Elizabeth of York 3 Akhenaton 4 Durer 5/15 New Left 7 Plato 8 Hugh Trevor Roper 9 Virunga 13 Onassis 17 Netanyahu 18 Vietnam 22 Elton 24 Anson 26 Mir **TEN WINNERS OF CLASSIC PUZZLES** O Frey, Shropshire; G Derbyshire, Lancashire; C Macdonald, Glasgow; N Short, Kent; T Yates, Lancashire; I Pollock, Lincolnshire; H Fluck, Gloucestershire; M Tucker, Wiltshire; E Good, Derbyshire; H Harrison, Bristol

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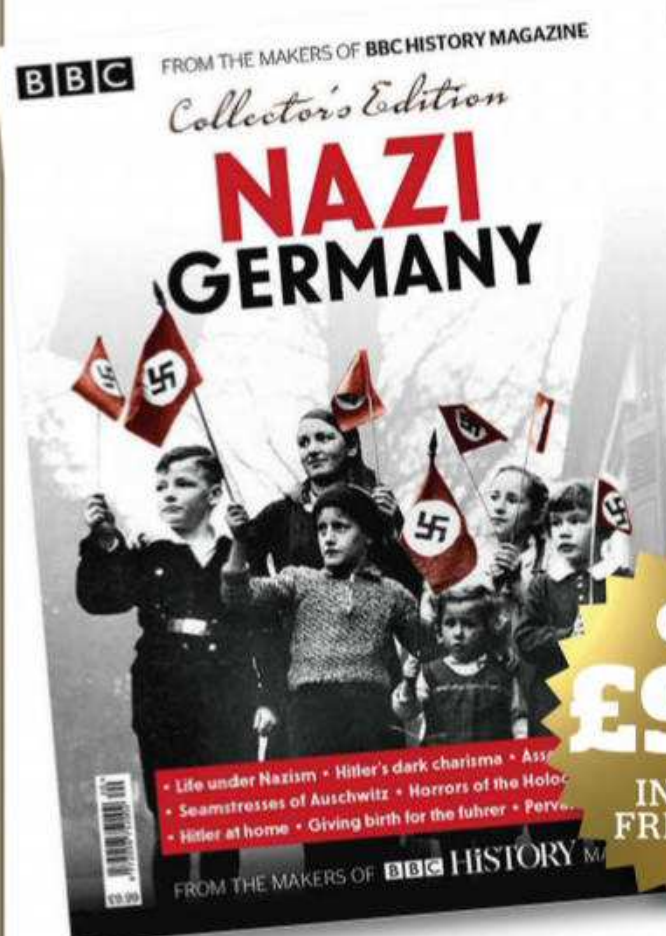
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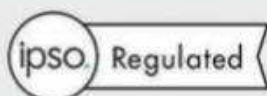
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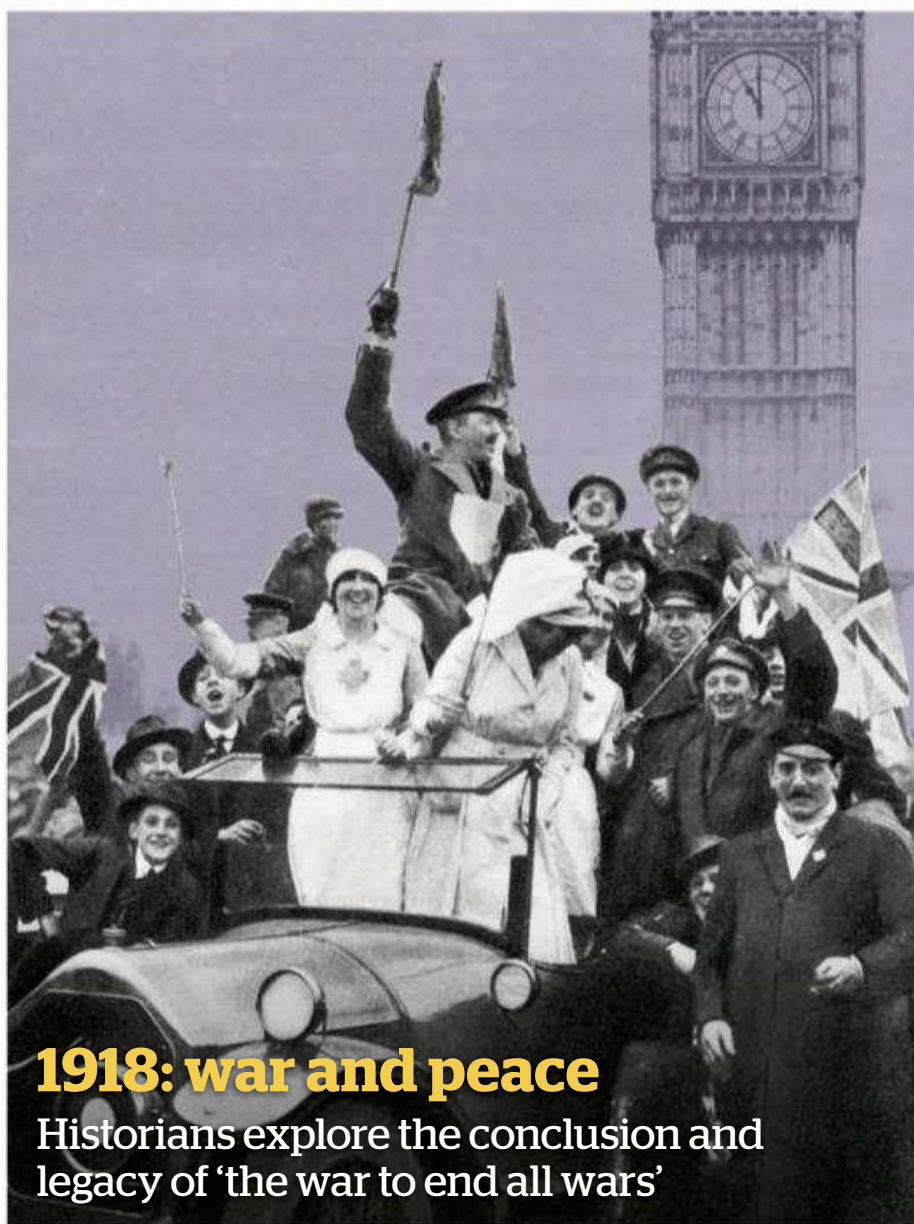
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OCTOBER ISSUE ON SALE 6 SEPTEMBER 2018



1918: war and peace

Historians explore the conclusion and legacy of 'the war to end all wars'



Anglo-Saxons

Michael Wood describes some of the greatest achievements of pre-Conquest England

Rethinking Lincoln

Lucy Worsley argues for a new perspective on the US president's actions against slavery

Churchill's emotions

Andrew Roberts explores the wartime leader's more sensitive side





“From his early days Beveridge used his formidable skills as a lawyer and economist to promote social reform. He never lost this hunger”

Tim Farron, former Liberal Democrat leader, chooses

William Beveridge

1879–1963

William Beveridge was an economist and social reformer, best known for his 1942 report ‘Social Insurance and Allied Services’ (the Beveridge Report), which formed the basis for the post-Second World War welfare state. In 1908, he had joined the Board of Trade and helped implement the Liberal government’s national system of labour exchanges, as well as a National Insurance scheme designed to combat unemployment and poverty. He was director of the London School of Economics from 1919–37 and served briefly as a Liberal MP from 1944–45.

When did you first hear about William Beveridge?

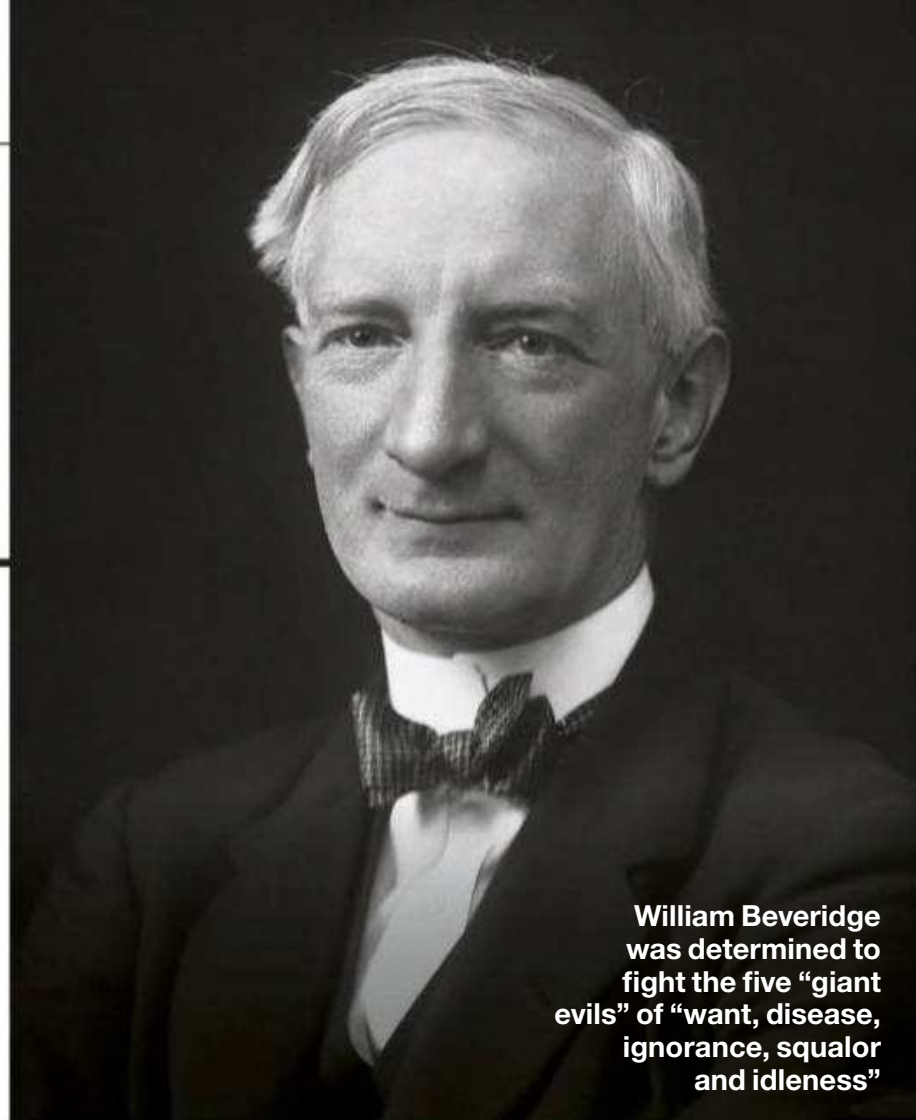
A conversation with my nan made me think about what he had achieved. She explained that she and my father might not have survived his birth had it not been for the brand new National Health Service (NHS). There was a serious complication which meant mother and baby (my father) spent a long time in hospital.

What kind of person was he?

Beveridge had a sharp mind and a keen conscience, and was eager to improve the lives of those society had forgotten. From his early days he used his formidable skills as a lawyer and economist to promote social reform. In the great reforming Liberal government of 1906–14, he helped establish unemployment insurance and labour exchanges. And he never lost this hunger for reform. His dying words were: “I have a thousand things to do.”

What made Beveridge a hero?

He had an enormous influence on 20th-century Britain. If Lloyd George provided the political brilliance for the great welfare reforms of the pre-First World War Liberal government, Beveridge provided the intellectual firepower. And remember, a lot of the building blocks for the post-Second World War welfare state were first put in place by the Liberals, driven in part by Beveridge’s determination to fight the five “giant evils” of “want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness”. This resulted in the poor, for the first time, being given some protection from unemployment, illness and poverty in old age.



William Beveridge was determined to fight the five “giant evils” of “want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness”

Later on, the Beveridge Report of 1942 established the postwar settlement and it broadly remains in place today.

What was Beveridge’s finest hour?

Although the 1945 election cut short Beveridge’s career as a Liberal MP, it started his most enduring legacy – the NHS. Labour was elected with a landslide and set about implementing the welfare state, which Beveridge had set out in his report. The jewel in the crown was the NHS, establishing the principle that health care should be available to all, regardless of ability to pay.

Is there anything you don’t particularly admire about him?

Like many thinkers in the first half of the 20th century, Beveridge was interested in eugenics, which makes us shudder today. Even the greatest thinkers are still products of their time.

Can you see any parallels between his life and your own?

The principles which guided him are in many ways the same as those that still guide the party I belong to today. And I believe we saw his influence in Lib Dem policies such as free early years education, the pupil premium, the national apprenticeship scheme and free school dinners, which were all enacted during the coalition years.

If you could meet Beveridge, what would you ask him?

About his hopes and dreams for the future of the NHS. I’d also love to know what it was like working for figures such as Churchill and Lloyd George. **H**

Tim Farron was talking to York Membery

Tim Farron was the leader of the Liberal Democrats from 2015–17. He has been MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale since 2005

DISCOVER MORE

LISTEN AGAIN

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